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Fénelon: The Mystic

By

JAMES MUDGE,

Author of "The Saintly Calling," "The Best of Browning," etc.

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To My Dear Wife.

A WISE MOTHER OF CHILDREN,
A FAITHFUL MISSIONARY IN INDIA,
AN EFFICIENT WORKER IN MANY CHURCHES.

A WORD TO THE READER

THERE have been many lives of Fénelon. Four were brought out in the eighteenth century, and two quite extensive ones were issued as recently as 1901. In a few cases they have been written in a spirit of cold, supercilious disparagement and cynical comment by people who evidently had no experience which would qualify them to understand the character they rashly attempted to portray. But the endeavor to pull Fénelon down from the pedestal on which he has so long stood can not succeed. So long as his own writings remain to bear testimony to the high qualities of his mind and soul, his fame is secure. It is the chief regret of the present writer that, owing to the restricted size of the book, he has not been able to give more of Fénelon's own words. The reader is recommended to procure the "Spiritual Letters" of Fénelon, published in two volumes by E. P. Dutton & Co., New York.[1]

[1] This edition of the "Letters," edited by H. L. Sidney Lear, is also published by the Longmans of London. There is an abridged edition, in paper, for fifteen cents, for sale by George W. McCalla, Philadelphia, who also publishes Fénelon's "Christian Counsel," "Spiritual Letters" of Madame Guyon, "Life of Dr. John Tauler," and other similar books. The five most important Lives of Fénelon are by E. K. Sanders, Longmans, London, 1901; by Viscount St. Cyres, Methuen & Co., London, 1901; by H. L. Sidney Lear, Rivingtons, London, 1877; by Dr. T. C. Upham, Harpers, New York, 1846; and by Charles Butler, Esq., John Murray, London, 1819.

It is not claimed that Fénelon was wholly without faults, or was in all respects ahead of his times. How could that be expected? He took, in the main, of course, the Roman Catholic view in the questions that arose regarding heresy and the general affairs of the Church. It is not necessary to defend him for this. We are concerned, in studying such persons, not so much with their dogmatic opinions and beliefs, the result of their environment, as with the spirit of their lives, their attainments in holiness, and the light which they can shed on the best means of growth in grace. It is believed that the present volume will be found helpful to this end. The type of piety exemplified by Fénelon, Fletcher, Faber, and others of this sort, does not appeal with equal force to all, owing to difference of mental and physical constitution. But all, whatever their temperament, can get only good by contemplating such an example as is presented in these pages. They can not feel the quick throbs of his deeply loving heart, and note the sincerity of purpose with which he served his dear Redeemer, without being stimulated in their zeal, and helped to walk, in their own way, more worthily of the vocation with which they themselves are called. That this may indeed be the outcome for every reader of the following chapters, is the earnest prayer of the author.

JAMES MUDGE.

JAMAICA PLAIN, MASS.

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Fénelon: The Mystic

CHAPTER I.

FROM YOUTH TO MANHOOD.

CHRISTIAN perfection, or the highest possibilities of Christian grace and growth, is a theme of intense interest to every true lover of the Lord. There are many ways of promoting it, widely differing in their merits and their helpfulness. Without disparaging other methods, it may be safely said that nothing can be better than example. Christianity centers around a person; and personal experience perennially appeals. Better than abstract discussion is concrete practice. More profitable than speculation and controversy is an actual life on highest levels. There is also a large advantage in beholding such a life in another age and land and Church, thus noting how God can magnify and fulfill Himself in very diverse circumstances, and amid intellectual influences that to us are quite obnoxious.

We invite, therefore, the attention of the thoughtful reader to a man who presents one of the most perfect types of human purity that the world has ever seen; one who for two hundred years has stood among the choicest few of those universally esteemed to be authorities in spiritual things; one endowed with a luster which the lapse of time can not tarnish,—a luster far brighter than can be bestowed by mere worldly honors or temporal prosperity, however high. He not only had a heart filled with the love of God and glowing with pure devotion, but also a mind capable of the closest analysis and the keenest discrimination. He was not only a saint, but also a scholar and a genius, an original thinker as well as a pursuer of holiness. Such combinations are very rare. His thirst for perfection has probably never been surpassed. Seldom, if ever, has such a remarkable combination of high qualities tabernacled in the flesh. He had both modesty and majesty, both simplicity and sublimity, unconquerable firmness in duty, unsurpassed meekness in society; he was equally eminent for piety and politeness, for morals and manners; he was sympathetic and chivalrous, severe to himself, indulgent to others. In the midst of a voluptuous court he practiced the virtues of an anchorite; with the revenues of a prince at command he hardly allowed himself ordinary comforts. His abilities awaken our admiration, his afflictions excite our compassion. Born among the nobility of earth, he resisted the

blandishments of earthly pomp, and became crowned with the far higher nobility of heaven. He was truly humble and truly heroic; good as well as great; skillful in teaching, wise in counsel, master of an elegant style both in composition and discourse; faithful to his friends and kind to his foes; devoted to his native land, generous to his family, a man of peace yet ready to fight for the faith, true to his convictions, tolerant toward those of other beliefs, tenderly affectionate, vigorously diligent; the glory of his country, the joy of mankind, the beloved of the Lord. He had an intense nature, and was, as has been said, "One whose religion must be more loving than love, his daily life more kind than kindness, his words truer than truth itself." Lamartine calls him "beautiful as a Raphael's St. John leaning on the bosom of Christ." He had the imagination of a woman for dreaming of heaven, and the soul of a man for subduing the earth. The especially feminine qualities were prominent in him, yet he strikes no one as effeminate, and when he felt himself set for the defense of the truth he showed a power that greatly surprised his enemies. "His soul was like a star and dwelt apart," "alone with the Alone." And yet he was so deeply interested in the welfare of France and his fellow-men that he has been called a politician; statesman would be the word more befitting the facts, for his ideas as to the measures and policies necessary to make the land prosperous were in the main very wise, and he

had no personal ends to serve. In whatever capacity we consider him—poet, orator, moralist, metaphysician, politician, instructor, bishop, friend, persecuted Christian—he excites our keenest interest, our warmest admiration. He greatly desired to please every one, and succeeded so far as circumstances allowed; but the desire was held in strictest control by a strong sense of duty, which compelled him at times to do and say things most unacceptable to many. He was no courtier, no flatterer, he could not make his own interests the first consideration. He was a prophet in Gomorrah, charged with a message which pressed upon him for utterance, and for the delivery of which the time was short. At the court of Louis XIV—a spot above all others on the face of the earth, perhaps, in that century, disgraced by selfishness, hypocrisy, and intrigue—he bears not a little resemblance to a seraph sent on a divine mission to the shades of the lost. There is endless fascination in his story. He was not without faults, but his faults were those of his age; his virtues were his own. He turned a haughty, irritable, overbearing young prince, an incipient Cæsar Borgia, into the mildest, most docile, obedient of men. He possessed his soul in peace amid provocations that would have been far too much for most of us. Neither public disgrace nor personal bereavement had power to embitter him. He listened to the voice of God within him, and marched straight on, breast forward. In the language of Herder, "His Church

indeed canonized him not, but humanity has." He is a saint in the eyes of multitudes not attracted by official sanctity; an apostle of liberty that dared withstand the Grand Monarque; a martyr spending half a life in exile, through the machinations of a court faction which dreaded his incorruptible goodness. "Being dead, he yet speaketh." "One of the noblest men who ever lived," says Dr. John Henry Kurtz, the distinguished Church historian. Joseph de Maistre exclaims: "Do we wish to paint ideal greatness? Let us try to imagine something that surpasses Fénelon—we shall not succeed." Let us, then, putting aside imagination, endeavor to rescue from the musty record of the misty past, a lifelike image of this many-sided, multiple, versatile personality.

François de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon was born August 6, 1651, at the castle, or chateau, of Fénelon, about three miles from the town of Sarlat, in the department of Southern France, formerly called Perigord, now Dordogne, north of the river Garonne. The De Salignacs were of an ancient and distinguished family, counting in their long pedigree many of the best names of France—bishops, governors, generals, and ambassadors. But it is safe to say that they have derived more luster from the single name of the Archbishop of Cambrai than from all the rest who through several

centuries filled lofty stations in camp and court and Church.

Very little is known about his parents or his early life. Pons de Salignac, Count of La Mothe Fénelon, father of Francis, was twice married, having fourteen children by his first wife and three by his second. The eldest of the three was Francis. His mother, Mademoiselle Louise de la Cropte de Saint-Arbre, sister of a celebrated lieutenant who served under Marshal Turenne, is said to have been unusually pious, which we can well believe, and to have perpetuated some of her other traits in her famous son. From his father's side he doubtless inherited his diplomatic temperament and a goodly degree of worldly wisdom. His peculiar situation in the household could hardly fail to have had something to do with his character. The numerous grown-up sons and daughters of his father's first marriage took umbrage at the second; hence the precocious and sensitive child had abundant occasion to practice all possible arts of ingratiation to obtain forgiveness for having intruded his existence upon them, and to make it pleasant for his mother. His constitution was delicate, and he had a sickly childhood; once at least in his early days his life was despaired of, and he only recovered to be for years the victim of sleeplessness and kindred ailments. He was the idol of his old father, who, recognizing his unusual talents, took special pains with his education. It was intrusted at first to a private pre-

ceptor, who seems to have been well fitted for his task, and gave to his pupil in a few years a better knowledge of Greek and Latin than is commonly obtained at so early an age, doubtless laying thus the foundation of his exquisitely finished style. At twelve he left the paternal roof for the neighboring University of Cahors (a town about sixty miles north of Toulouse, containing now an obelisk of Fénelon), where he pursued for some three years philosophical and philological studies and took his degrees in the arts.

His father probably died about this time, as we hear nothing further of him, and his uncle, the Marquis Antoine de Fénelon, who had lost his own son, acted henceforth as the father of his nephew. It was a most happy circumstance, for the marquis was deeply religious and of an unsullied private life, as well as very independent in his character. The Grand Condé, greatest general of his time, described him as "equally at home in society, war, and the council chamber." When M. de Harlai was nominated to the Archbishopric of Paris, the marquis remarked to him, "There is a wide difference, my Right Reverend Lord, between the day when the nomination for such an office brings to the party the compliments of the whole kingdom, and the day on which he appears before God to render Him an account of his administration;" a reflection which, although much needed, could not have been very agreeable to De Harlai, for he was a no-

torious evil liver, who introduced every species of corruption into the administration of his diocese, and scandalized all by the iniquities also of his private life. Another indication of the marquis's truly noble quality is seen in the fact that when M. Olier, the celebrated founder of the Congregation of St. Sulpice, wished to form an association of gentlemen whose courage was past impeachment, to bind themselves with an oath neither to accept any challenge nor act the part of second in any duel—that the practice of dueling might thus be checked—he asked M. de Fénelon to take the post of president of the association, being convinced that there was no one whose reputation was more firmly established both in court and camp.

Under the guidance, then, of this admirable relative, who was so exceptionally well fitted by character, position, and situation to give his nephew the best possible start in life, and who tenderly loved him, young Francis came to Paris in 1666, at the age of fifteen. It was not, of course, the Paris of the present day; but even then it was a great city, reaching back for its beginning to the Roman times, and recognized as the seat of government for at least a thousand years. Under Henry of Navarre (1589-1610) great improvements had been made, and by the accession of Louis XIV—who began to reign nominally in 1643, at the age of five, but really took charge of the kingdom in 1661—through the completion of several bridges, roads, and quays,

and the erection of various public and private palaces, a new face had been put on the old city. It was already the focus of European civilization, learning, and eloquence, as well as the center of all that was most attractive and distinguished in France. The best institutions were there, the best opportunities for advancement, the highest privileges and advantages of every sort; so that to it naturally gravitated all who wished to make the most of themselves under the eye of that Grand Monarch whose favor was life. Francis, therefore, no doubt counted himself greatly blessed at this change, and entered upon his Parisian life—which was to last thirty-one years—with very high, ambitious hopes. His guardian sent him for two years to the Collége du Plessis, then under the rule of M. Gobinet, a first-rate principal. There he speedily distinguished himself as a scholar, and he also gave such tokens of possessing the gift of eloquence that before he was sixteen he was put forward to preach to an admiring audience. It is, perhaps, worth noting that Bossuet—who was so soon to be closely associated with Fénelon, at first in friendship, then in fierce hostility—also preached at the same age, with similar applause, before a brilliant assemblage in Paris.

What was the next step? A noble under Louis XIV had two possible careers open to him, and only two; they were the army and the Church. It is not probable that the matter was long debated, if at all,

in Francis' case. Everything about him, his gifts of speech, his high scholarship, his deep piety, his rather delicate health, pointed to the clerical vocation, and there can be no question but this was with him a divine calling, to which doubtless his heart gave full assent. So he was placed, in 1688, at the seminary of St. Sulpice to be trained for the priesthood.

Since he was to spend no less than ten happy years, in the formative period of seventeen to twenty-seven, in connection with this institution, it may be well that we say a few words about it and its director. It was the principal fruit of the great Catholic revival at the beginning of the century, the embodiment of all the force of that movement—a movement marked by very earnest piety and a somewhat unusual combination of emotionalism and asceticism. It was founded by a group of devoted men sprung from the upper-middle class; and chief among them was M. Olier, a man justly celebrated for his saintly life. He was appointed in 1642 to the parish of St. Sulpice when it was noted as the most depraved quarter of Paris. He labored unremittingly and very successfully to reform this unpromising flock, and the young priests who were associated with him in his task constituted the nucleus of the seminary and community of St. Sulpice. The necessary building to house the institution, to the establishment of which Monsieur Olier gave himself with highest enthusiasm, was com-

pleted in 1652—a square edifice capable of receiving one hundred inmates. This became the center of a most wholesome and inspiring activity.

The founder had a very high ideal of sacerdotal character. He would not admit any who embraced the sacred calling from considerations of ambition or expediency, and those admitted were subjected to the sharpest kind of tests. Whatever their birth or condition they were required to perform the menial duties of the house, and to mingle on terms of absolute equality with their fellow-students. The complete immolation of self was set as the paramount aim before those who looked forward to holy orders. The will must be entirely surrendered. The good priest must become the model of all the virtues. All earthly interests and ties must be renounced. The closest union with the Divine was to be cultivated. A very literal interpretation of the teaching of the Master was followed. The pupils were urged to study the Gospels till they could bring the Divine life before them at any moment in a series of mental pictures which should help them in the decision of all perplexing questions of duty, and were exhorted to keep themselves in such a disposition that meditation on that model life would never seem strange or demand a violent mental revulsion whatever their outward circumstances might be. While the ceremonies of the Church were observed with minute exactness, and occasional austerities were practiced, and learning

was not neglected, the main thought was that the perfection of personal character must be secured at all costs; the world was to be abandoned, the flesh crucified, the devil in all his forms resisted, and lessons of humility, obedience, and charity were to be most carefully learned. They were taught that in the silence which succeeds the struggle of self-abandonment they would find Christ coming to them—the Christ who had borne all and understood all, and whose presence was far more worth having than the prizes they had missed or put away.

It can well be believed that this wholly consecrated man, the first superior of St. Sulpice, won to himself so large a share of personal affection and loyalty from his students that when he was removed from its care many feared its collapse. But this was not to be. A suitable successor was found in M. Louis Tronson, a man every way as capable as the first founder—indeed more learned in theology—and fully disposed to continue the traditions of the institution as already laid down; a man who coveted no external recognition, joined in no race for preferment, but gave himself with singleness of eye to the great work intrusted to him by the Master. It was to his care that Francis Fénelon was committed, and he speedily won the enthusiastic affection of the young man. In a few years Fénelon writes concerning his teacher to Pope Clement XI as follows: "Never have I seen his equal for piety and prudence, for love of justice and insight

into character. I glory in the thought that I was brought up under his wing." Fénelon was evidently one of the Abbé Tronson's favorites, for he was a favorite with everybody, and all could see in the brilliant youth a promise that would do honor to those who had a share in his development. A high degree of confidence was given and received on both sides. Francis wrote to his uncle, in a burst of gratitude, one day: "I earnestly desire to be able to tell you some part of all that passes between M. Tronson and me; but indeed, Monsieur, I know not how to do so. I find I can be much more explicit with him than with you, nor would it be easy to describe the degree of union we have reached. If you could hear our conversation you would not know your pupil, and you would see that God has very marvelously helped on the work which you begun. My health does not improve, which would be a great trial to me if I were not learning how to comfort myself." This was very beautiful, very delightful, and though such complete dominance of one personality by another is not devoid of danger, the results in this case appear to have justified the experiment. Francis' early bent to deep piety was greatly intensified during these years, and his views of disinterested or perfect love, so strongly brought out in later times, were scarcely more than the natural evolution of the thoughts and habits drilled into him during this formative period. He greatly enjoyed this home of piety and study. His love for

the seminary never decayed. He declared on his death-bed that he knew of no institution more venerable or more apostolic.

It was while at the seminary that Fénelon thought he had a call to the mission field. The congregation of St. Sulpice had a large missionary establishment at Montreal, and many of the students from the Paris house had gone thither. It was natural, with his intense unworldliness, that he should wish to follow in their footsteps, and in one of his descent it would not be surprising if the love of adventure was unconsciously mingled with a more religious ambition to show his love for the Savior by doing a great work for Him in a difficult field. How many have had these longings, but have been providentially prevented from carrying them out! In Fénelon's case difficulties at once sprung up. His uncle, the Marquis Antoine, strongly objected on account of the delicacy of his constitution, and another uncle, the Bishop of Sarlat, coincided with this opinion. A letter on the subject to the bishop from M. Tronson, dated February, 1667, says, "His strong, persisting inclination, the firmness of his resolution, and the purity of his intentions have made me feel that they deserved attention, and led me to give you as exact a report as may be of our action in the matter." The teacher had done his very best to dissuade the youth from his purpose. "I have told him plainly that if he can calm his longings and be quiet, he

might, by going on with his studies and spiritual training, become more fitted to work usefully hereafter for the Church." He adds, "I perceive too confirmed a resolution to have much hope of change." The feelings called out were so strong that persuasion seemed useless, and so the teacher appealed to the authority of the guardians; which proved sufficient to stop the rash enterprise.

But the missionary impulse still burned strongly in the breast of this enthusiastic youth, and it burst forth again a few years later. He received the tonsure, and entered holy orders in 1675, at the age of twenty-four, and went for a while to work in the diocese of his uncle, the Bishop of Sarlat. It was at this time that his thoughts were turned to the Levant. A letter of October 9, 1675, sets forth somewhat rhapsodically his excited feelings: "I long to seek out that Areopagus whence St. Paul preached the unknown God to heathen sages. . . . Neither will I forget thee, O island consecrated by the heavenly visions of the beloved disciple! O blessed Patmos, I will hasten to kiss the footsteps left on thee by the apostle, and to imagine heaven open to my gaze! . . . Already I see schism healed; East and West reunited; Asia awaking to the light after her long sleep; the Holy Land, once trodden by our Savior's feet and watered by his blood, delivered from profaners and filled with new glory; the children of Abraham, more numerous than the stars, now scattered over the face of the

earth, gathered from all her quarters to confess the Christ they crucified, and to rise again with him." This was decidedly visionary, and somewhat overwrought; but it shows at least a heart on fire to do something extraordinary for God, and this he had at all periods of his life. He did not go to Greece and Palestine, abandoning the project in deference to the wishes of his family, to whom he was extremely reluctant to give pain. It was a romantic dream rather than a true vocation.

It is thought by some that he really went to Montreal at a later date. The *Correspondance Litteraire* of July 25, 1863,[1] gives a letter from the archives of the French Ministry of Marine in the handwriting of Colbert, the great Finance Minister of Louis XIV, who also had charge of the department of commerce, dated in 1675, to Frontenac, Governor of Canada, in which Louis XIV says: "I have blamed the action of Abbé Fénelon, and have ordered him not to return to Canada. But I ought to say to you that it was difficult to institute a criminal proceeding against him or oblige the priests of the seminary of St. Sulpice at Montreal to testify against him; and it was necessary to remit the case to his bishop or the grand vicar to punish him by ecclesiastical penalties, or to arrest him and send him back to France by the first ship." There was not then in France any other abbé of

[1] Quoted in *The American Presbyterian and Theological Review* for October, 1863, page 674, and also in McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia, Vol. III, page 529.

that name, so far as is known. Somewhat confirmatory of it is the fact that Appleton's Cyclopedia, in its account of the Society of St. Sulpice says, "In 1668 the Sulpicians, François de Fénelon and Claude Trouvé, founded the first Iroquois mission at the western extremity of Lake Ontario, but their labors were confined principally to the Indians near Montreal." The dates do not harmonize; but it may be that, in some irregular way that did not commend itself to the authorities, our hero was for a time in Canada; but if so, it is very singular that it left so little trace upon his life.

He gave himself for some three years after his ordination to labors in the parish of St. Sulpice, living still at the seminary, and endeavoring to spread the light of his faith among the poor wherever he could reach them best, whether in prisons and hospitals or their own quarters. It was good training for him in many ways, enlarging his sympathies, deepening his views of life, and bringing him into touch with children as well as women. Doubtless he gathered in these years—for he had quick powers of observation and a very active mind—much of that amazing knowledge concerning these classes which surprised his friends when he came subsequently to pour forth in letters or books the wisest of counsels on education and kindred topics. M. Languet, curé of the parish at this time, was said to distribute more than a million francs in alms yearly, while his own room was furnished with

nothing more than a coarse bed and two straw chairs. Under such guidance Fénelon could not fail to learn many useful lessons, and to become still more completely fitted for the great career which was soon to open before him.

It was in 1678 that Fénelon, while attending quietly to his duties at the parish of St. Sulpice, preaching on Sundays and visiting among the poor during the week, received the important appointment of superior to the community called the Nouvelles Catholiques, or New Catholics. He was twenty-seven at this time, and had developed into a very lovable, charming, attractive, and every way promising young man. His high birth, solid education, brilliant parts, spotless life, eloquence of speech, and influential friends, all tended to bring him forward into the public eye. The words of the Chancellor d'Aguesseau on Fénelon, found in the memoirs of the life of his father, although applying perhaps in fullest measure a little later, may be inserted here, as showing what it must have been felt, by discerning observers, he would erelong become.

"Fénelon," says the chancellor, "was one of those uncommon men who are destined to give luster to their age; and who do equal honor to human nature by their virtues, and to literature by their superior talent. He was affable in his deportment and luminous in his discourse, the peculiar qualities of which were a rich, delicate, and powerful

imagination, but which never let its power be felt. His eloquence had more of mildness in it than of vehemence; and he triumphed as much by the charms of his conversation as by the superiority of his talents. He always brought himself to the level of his company; he never entered into disputation, and he sometimes appeared to yield to others at the very time that he was leading them. Grace dwelt upon his lips. He discussed the greatest subjects with facility; the most trifling were ennobled by his pen; and upon the most barren he scattered the flowers of rhetoric. The peculiar but unaffected mode of expression which he adopted made many persons believe that he possessed universal knowledge as if by inspiration. It might indeed have been almost said that he rather invented what he knew than learned it. He was always original and creative, imitating no one, and himself inimitable. A noble singularity pervaded his whole person, and a certain undefinable and sublime simplicity gave to his appearance the air of a prophet." His personal appearance has been well sketched by one of his contemporaries, the Duke de St. Simon, a satirical, misanthropical, utterly worldly man. "Fénelon," says St. Simon, "was a tall man, thin, well-made, and with a large nose. From his eyes issued the fire and animation of his mind, like a torrent; and his countenance was such that I never yet beheld any one similar to it, nor could it ever be forgotten if once seen. It combined everything, and yet with

everything in harmony. It was grave, and yet allurring; it was solemn, and yet gay; it bespoke equally the theologian, the bishop, and the nobleman. Everything which was visible in it, as well as in his whole person, was delicate, intellectual, graceful, becoming, and, above all, noble. It required an effort to cease looking at him. All the portraits are strong resemblances, though they have not caught that harmony which was so striking in the original, and that individual delicacy which characterized each feature. His manners were answerable to his countenance. They had that air of ease and urbanity which can be derived only from intercourse with the best society, and which diffused itself over all his discourse. He possessed a natural eloquence, graceful and finished, and a most insinuating yet noble and proper courtesy; an easy, clear, agreeable utterance; a wonderful power of explaining the hardest matters in a lucid, distinct manner. Add to all this that he was a man who never sought to seem cleverer than those with whom he conversed, who brought himself insensibly to their level, putting them at their ease, and enthralling them so that one could neither leave him nor distrust him, nor help seeking him again. It was this rare gift which he possessed to the utmost degree which bound all his friends so closely to him all his life in spite of his disgrace at court, and which led them, when scattered, to gather together to talk of him, regret him, long after him, and cling more and more to

him, like the Jews to Jerusalem, and sigh and hope for his return, even as that unhappy race waits and sighs for their Messiah."

The community of the New Catholics had been founded in 1634 by Archbishop Gondi, as a protection for women converted from Protestantism, and as a means of propagating Church teachings among those yet unconverted. It was conducted by a community of women who did the work of Sisters of Charity outside its walls, and was presided over by a priest selected by the Archbishop of Paris. Marshal Turenne, himself a recent convert, gave largely to it, and the king, who was willing to combine gentle means with harsh for the accomplishment of his purposes in bringing all his subjects into one faith, took great interest in it. Hitherto the post of superior had been filled by much older men, but, though only twenty-seven, Fénelon was found to combine all those qualities which fitted him for the employment—distinguished talents, education, amiable manners, unusual prudence and discretion, much love to God, and great benevolence to man. The archbishop who selected him, M. de Harlai, was, as we have already noted, by no means of Fénelon's stamp. He was a courtier, a man of the world, regardless of morality, and ever scheming for his own advancement. Having noted the capability of Fénelon, perhaps he thought, by making him a sort of protegé, he could attach him to his interests, obtain credit by his successes, and use him

for his purposes. But if he thought this he did not show his usual discernment; for Fénelon, though willing to accept the office assigned, which gave promise of large usefulness, was in no way attracted by the character of his patron, and no considerations of expediency could induce him to pay court in that direction. Consequently, De Harlai's early liking changed erelong to pronounced enmity. He noticed the absence of Fénelon from his levees, and when he did present himself at a certain reception, rebuked him with the words, "It seems that you desire to be forgotten, M. l'Abbé, and you will be." Fénelon's friendship also with Bossuet became established about this time, and this doubtless increased the animosity of the archbishop, as the two were rivals for the favor of the king, on which the coveted promotion to the cardinalate, which each desired, so largely depended.

It was probably owing, somewhat at least, to this unfriendly influence on the part of De Harlai that Fénelon received no appointment which could supply him with funds; for the post of Superior carried no salary, and until 1681 he continued to be entirely dependent for everything upon his uncle, the marquis. In that year his uncle, the Bishop of Sarlat, resigned to him the deanery of Carenac, at Quercy, on the Dordogne, and this small benefice, producing between 3,000 and 4,000 livres annually —about $2,000 a year of modern money—was the only revenue Fénelon possessed for a long time,

until, indeed, his forty-third year. On leaving the Sulpician seminary, he took up his abode with his uncle, the Marquis de Fénelon, in the Abbey of St. Germain, and gave himself up as entirely to his work as if he had not been brought into so much closer proximity to the court and the world of Paris. He avoided general society, only living intimately with some few chosen friends. His uncle was able to introduce him into a rare circle, prominent in which were the Duke and Duchess of Beauvilliers, and the Duke and Duchess of Chevreuse (the two ladies were sisters, daughters of the great finance minister, Colbert), Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, and Madame de Maintenon. We must say a few words about these people, for they had much to do with Fénelon through all his subsequent life.

"The Duke de Beauvilliers," says St. Simon, "was early touched by God, and never lost His presence, but lived entirely in the future world, indifferent to place and cabal and worldly advantage, content, when called to the council-board, simply to state his true opinion, without much caring whether it was followed or not." Punctual and orderly almost to excess, he controlled his household with vigilant kindness, and took on his shoulders, as the king himself bore witness, a load of administrative details that would have killed four other men. In society he was rather shy and stiff by nature, as well as on principle exceedingly careful to set a close guard on eyes and ears and lips, so

that even when, as a principal minister, he was the observed of all observers, surrounded by princes and nobles, he repelled by his reserve. He had been at court nearly all his life, having early succeeded Marshal Villeroy as head of the Council of Finance, and being also first gentleman of the chamber. He had also been governor of Havre. He was called to the treasury in 1685, and to the council-board in 1691. He was acknowledged on all sides to be a man of remarkable piety and purity of life, and, as a courtier, without reproach—a very rare thing in those days. His chief fault was his timidity, and his excessive subserviency to the king. But when his conscience was aroused he could show a boldness that was most admirable, and all the more to be commended because somewhat foreign to his nature. He remained true as steel to Fénelon to his dying day, his friendship never wavering or showing diminution, even when the latter was banished from court, and all his friends were in a measure under the ban because of the king's fierce anger. In later years the king did his best to separate the two, even sending for the duke and explicitly threatening him with a like fate to that of his friend if he did not give him up. But the duke replied, with dignity and feeling: "Sire, you have placed me where I am, and you can displace me. I shall accept the will of my sovereign as the voice of God, and I should retire from court at your bidding regretting your displeasure, but hoping to lead a more

peaceful life in retirement." This manly, uncompromising stand made a deep impression on the king, who, in spite of his liking for his own way, knew that he could hardly afford to spare so faithful and conscientious a servant; nothing more was said about the matter.

His brother-in-law, the Duke de Chevreuse, was different in disposition, though equally devoted to religion. He was abler, broader-minded, better informed, more genial and witty, but less systematic, and a very poor business man. He had no fixed hours for anything, and was always behindhand. Had it not been for the king he must have died a beggar; for he had little of his own, and his wife's large fortune was wasted on costly but futile experiments, such as canals made at enormous expense to float down the timber from woods which he sold before even a tree was felled. He was charming in his manners, and was not simply loved, but adored by his family, and friends, and servants. Throughout his troubles, which were many, he was never for a moment cast down, but offered up his all to God and fixed his eyes on Him. "Never man possessed his soul in peace as he did," wrote St. Simon, "as the Scripture says, 'He carried it in his hands.'" He was even nearer to Fénelon in some ways than the other duke, and equally stanch in his attachment. He had no special portfolio in the ministry, but was consulted by the king about most departments, and was very highly esteemed by him.

The two sisters, wives of these dukes—there were indeed three, the third having married the Duke de Mortemart, but of this family we hear almost nothing—were linked by the strongest bonds of sympathy and affection, and the three families lived in the closest union of principle and action, which gave them great strength amid the profligate, time-serving court. Twice a week there were dinners at the Hotel de Beauvilliers, where the society was at once select, intellectual, and devout. A bell was on the table, and no servant was present, that they might converse without restraint. It was in this society that Fénelon, being introduced, became speedily the leader. He was accepted by the two dukes, not as director simply but as spiritual master, as the mind of their mind, says St. Simon, the soul of their soul, the sovereign ruler of their heart and conscience. Such he remained all his days. Fénelon and the Beauvilliers had not been long acquainted before the duchess, mother of eight daughters, begged him to set down some rules for the guidance of their education. This request is a proof not only of the versatility of his powers, but of the strength of his faculty of intuition, that a court lady should have turned to him for help in such matters. He had been educated from childhood to his sacred calling, shut off from any experience of some of the strongest of life's influences, and therefore on some accounts might seem poorly fitted to prove an apt adviser; but it was strongly

felt that he possessed the secret of truest wisdom, that what he taught was drawn from too high a source to be greatly affected by the limits of personal experience. Throughout his life, indeed, it was his power of sympathy, of entering into the difficulties of others, of realizing temptations that can never have been present with him, that made his influence so comprehensive—a power rarer and more marvelous than the greatest of intellectual gifts.

The work on the education of girls, which grew out of the duchess's request, swelled into a considerable compass, and was first published in 1687. It greatly increased his reputation, revealing a knowledge of child-nature which was most remarkable, and taking advanced ground in many particulars. He showed himself a thoroughgoing reformer, breaking away from the trammels of mediæval education that so long and so disastrously had ruled. There is hardly a page of it which might not afford profitable study for parents at the present day. It still holds a high position among works on this subject. His deep love for children sharpened his keen observation of all that concerned them. He severely reprobated the fashion of leaving them with uneducated persons; for he regarded the earliest years as of unspeakable importance in the formation of character.

"Never let them show themselves off," he says, "but do not be worried by their questions; rather

encourage them; they are the most natural opportunities of teaching." He discovered that children are always watching others, endowed with a great faculty of imitation, so that it is impossible to overestimate the responsibility of their first guardians. He recognized the necessity of discipline; but if the child has merited disgrace, he pleads that there should be some one to whom she can turn for sympathy, thus showing that he had fathomed that overwhelming sense of loneliness which is one of childhood's chief terrors. He says: "Make study pleasant, hide it under a show of liberty and amusement. Let the children interrupt their lessons sometimes with little jokes; they need such distraction to rest their brain. Never fear to give them reasons for everything. Never give extra lessons as a punishment." His method was to treat children as reasonable beings instead of unruly animals whom it was necessary to coerce against their will; and his object was to make them regard learning as a privilege and delight, not as a penance forced upon them by the tyranny of their elders. He made religion the groundwork of all education, but he would have it guarded against superstition. He stood strongly for the true, best rights of women, counting their occupations no less important to the public than those of men. He would give the young girl useful solid tastes that would fill her mind with real interests and prevent idle curiosity and the dissipations of romance-reading. "Give them some-

thing to manage, on condition that they give you an account of it," he pleads; "they will be delighted with the confidence, for it gives an incredible pleasure to the young when one begins to rely upon them and admit them to serious concerns."

This will suffice to show something of the trend of his work. Much that he urged is, of course, commonplace now, but it was not so in his day. He shows in his book so much knowledge of the needs and characteristics of little children not only, but of the special difficulties and infirmities of women, that it remains a marvel where, at this period of his life, he could have gained such insight into both. And all is illumined with his beautiful style and gentle spirit. Mr. John Morley remarks, "When we turn to modern literature from Fénelon's pages, who does not feel that the world has lost a sacred accent, as if some ineffable essence had passed out from our hearts?"

Madame de Maintenon has been mentioned as one of the little circle to whose intimacy Fénelon was introduced when beginning his Parisian career. The full particulars of her remarkable history must be sought in larger works. Yet it is essential that we know something concerning her, since for a while she was one of Fénelon's best supporters, and then became one of his most persistent foes. She was the grandchild of Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigne, a noted Protestant warrior and a noble friend of

Henry of Navarre, who died at Geneva in 1630.[2] Her father was a scamp, her mother a jailer's daughter. She was a stout Protestant in her younger days, but being left penniless at an early age, and wholly dependent upon charitable relatives, she was placed in a Parisian convent, and there converted to Catholicism. She was still only seventeen and uncommonly good-looking when, to escape the pressure of dependence, she consented to become the wife of Scarron, a writer of comic poetry and a cripple. So Frances d'Aubigne became Madame Scarron, and somewhat improved her position. Her husband died in five years, leaving her a pension. Falling in with Madame de Montespan, the king's mistress, that lady took a liking to her, and it was not long before she was established at a fine house in one of the suburbs, with a large income and a numerous staff of servants, as governess of the king's illegitimate children by this mistress. At the end of four years the children, with their governess, were housed in the palace, and the influence of the said governess over the king, who was naturally thrown much in contact with her, steadily increased. By the savings from her salary and the presents of the king she was able to purchase the estate of Maintenon, not far from Paris, and the king, who never had liked the harsh name of Scarron, soon began to call her Madame de Main-

[2] The celebrated historian of the Reformation, J. H. Merle d'Aubigne, who died at Geneva in 1872, was descended from the same family.

tenon, which henceforth became her title. In the midst of all the vicissitudes of her life she had maintained a good character, inheriting much from her grandfather, and now she became yet more austere in her piety. The Abbé Gobelin, a severe Jesuit confessor, directed her conscience, and Bossuet impressed his strong personality upon her. They persuaded her that she was the chosen instrument for the conversion of the king. So she set herself to the task, finding it on many accounts congenial, and achieving a remarkable degree of success. There seems to have been in the complex character of the king, in spite of his many sins, no little regard for religion—it is said that he never missed going to mass but once in his life—and he was already weary of Montespan, whose influence on him was unquestionably evil. So the new influence more and more prevailed; the mistress was dismissed to a convent, and the wise, devout, good-looking governess became a power at court, first lady in waiting to the crown princess, and female friend to the monarch. The king spent hours daily in her company, and was the better for it. She was a strict moralist, and none of the slanders rife about her seem to have any good foundation. She enjoyed the respect of the best people about the court, and was a friend of the neglected queen, who cried, "Providence has raised up Madame de Maintenon to bring my husband back to me." And this new favorite, who was not a mistress, believed

abundantly in the divine nature of her mission. She accepted the king's friendship to give him good counsels and end his slavery to vice. The care of his salvation became the first and most absorbing of her duties. She held herself a monitress, charged to encourage and console him, or to check him with reproaches that none but she dared utter. He called her "Your Seriousness." She never annoyed him with opposition, never encroached, had no will of her own, but became, as it were, the king's conception of his better self, his second conscience, a magnet quick to draw him, sometimes into the really worthier of two opposing courses, always into the more ecclesiastically virtuous. The queen died in her arms in 1683. Two years after, she was privately married to the king by the Archbishop of Paris in the presence of Père Lachaise, the king's confessor, after whom the famous cemetery in Paris is named. Such was the woman who ruled at Versailles when Fénelon came into office. He excited her interest on their first meeting, at or before 1683; for she wrote, under that date, to Madame de St. Geran: "Your Abbé de Fénelon is very well received; but the world does not do him justice. He is feared; he wishes to be loved; and is lovable."

We must briefly introduce one more personage to our readers before we can safely resume the current of the narrative. Jacques Bénigne Bossuet, who was for a while Fénelon's friend and then be-

came the bitterest of his foes, was born at Dijon, 1627. In his boyhood he was a brilliant scholar. At Paris he soon surpassed his teachers in acquirements. He took the Doctor's bonnet in 1652, and in the same year was received into priest's orders. He was first canon to the cathedral of Metz; in 1669, Bishop of Condom; in 1681, bishop of Meaux. In 1670 he was appointed preceptor to the dauphin, and gave most of his time for ten years to this office, resigning his bishopric for the purpose. In the pulpit his oratorical powers elicited universal applause. His celebrated Funeral Discourses, six in number, were, and still are, accounted masterpieces of rhetorical skill. Two words, strength and majesty, describe the dominant characteristics of his oratory. He had a mind well stored with noble sentiments. His sermons were almost entirely extempore, springing from a mind filled with his subject, guided by a few notes on paper. Attracted by the strength and sublimity of the Bible he moved largely within its circle of thought, rather than with saints, relics, and images, which were for the most part below the plane of his vision. Besides being one of the first preachers of the age, he was a celebrated polemic and a powerful writer, having also a Roman aptitude to rule. One of the strongest personalities which the French Church has produced, he exercised a commanding influence in various directions. The principles of Gallicanism as opposed to Ultramontanism found in him their stal-

wart champion. He was a famous apologist. His knowledge was completely at command, so that he did not shrink from oral disputation with the most learned adversaries. And he wielded a very strong pen. His "Exposition of the Catholic Faith" presents the doctrines of Rome in a liberal and plausible form. In his "History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches," and also in other treatises, he made out what was considered at the time a very strong defense of the Roman Catholic faith, but he has since been convicted, not merely of inaccuracy, but of false and garbled quotations. He died in 1704.

Bossuet, it will be seen, was twenty-four years older than Fénelon, and for a time was almost a father to him. At the zenith of his great reputation he was much attracted by the younger man and took great pains to attach him to himself. He invited him often, with one or two others, to his country residence at Germigny. They had stated hours of prayer and private study and relaxation, and in these last periods the bishop took pleasure in unfolding to his humbler companions all his sacred and literary stores of knowledge. Nothing could exceed the bishop's regard for Fénelon, or Fénelon's fondness for the bishop. The intercourse with a masculine intellect so much more developed than his own was, no doubt, a benefit to Fénelon, as well as a high compliment to him, for it compelled him to think for himself and brace himself some-

what in order to take a worthy part in the conversation. One can but regret that the friendship which seemed so suitable, and was prolific of such advantage to the Church, as well as mutual pleasure between these two great and good men, should in a few years, largely through misapprehensions and verbal disagreements, have been turned to bitterness and scandal.

It is probable that the ten years during which Fénelon held the post of superior at the New Catholics was the sunniest of his life. It was at least the freest from difficulties and complications. He was discovering the large possibilities of his own powers, developing healthfully in all directions, with a pleasant occupation, bright prospects, and an ever-widening circle of friends, who looked to him as an influence for good, and increasingly hung upon his words. He was called in this period to mourn the loss of his dear uncle, the marquis, who had been in many ways, both spiritually and temporally, such a help to him, and who passed away October 8, 1683. Just how much he had to do in these years at the convent is not clear. It seems likely that he was little more than warden or visitor, in general charge of the instruction, the other matters being managed by the mother superior acting under the minute directions of the government. For converting to the old faith those who had been born and trained in heresy—many of them, it would appear, brought there early, against their will, or in viola-

tion of the proper rights of their parents—Fénelon was marvelously equipped, knowing the controversy perfectly, and knowing also what points to touch upon with infinite tact, what appeals would be most effective in individual cases, what arguments to use, what influences to exert, what spirit to exhibit. He undoubtedly proved himself the tenderest and most persuasive of advocates and ministers, modifying, so far as possible, the harshness of the State which he was powerless to prevent.

It was his success at the head of this institution which called forth the next commission with which the king honored him, and which brought him into yet closer connection with the troubled current of affairs. In order the better to understand it we shall do well to pause at this point and consider for a little the ecclesiastical and political condition of France, and to some degree of the world at large.

CHAPTER II.

THE SETTING OF THE PICTURE.

It is absolutely essential, in studying any character, that we take into careful account the age and land in which he lived. We can not rightly estimate his merits or demerits unless we know the circumstances under which he was brought up, and the influences to which he was subjected. The background of the picture has large importance for showing off in proper light the principal figure. The setting of the gem has something to do with our appreciation of its value. Deeds which in one century would cover their perpetrator with infamy, in another would be regarded as wholly excusable. The amount of light afforded strictly measures the amount of guilt involved. Unavoidable ignorance exculpates. Fullness of knowledge imposes responsibility. No greater mistake could be made than to judge people irrespective of their surroundings. Moreover, it adds immensely to our interest in any person if we can, to some degree at least, look out upon the world with his eyes, see what he saw, and so be helped to feel as he felt. We become the better acquainted with him in proportion as we are able to put ourselves in his place. We

can certainly estimate him more equitably according as we reproduce to our mind the scenes of his day.

This being so, before we go further with the personal history of Fénelon the Saint we shall do well to spend a little while familiarizing ourselves with the world of his day both civil and ecclesiastical. How were matters in Church and State during the period in which this great man flourished? What was going on among the nations in general, and in France particularly? A brief survey seems necessary to give us the right point of view. Since Fénelon was born in 1651, the second half of the seventeenth century would appear to be in the main his epoch. What was the condition of things throughout Christendom then?

In America the middle of the seventeenth century saw the English making good their foothold on the rude Atlantic shore, in Virginia, Massachusetts, New York, and a few other points, contending with the Indians, the Dutch, and the home government, jealous of their liberties, extending their trade, and inaugurating great enterprises. It was in 1656 that the Quakers arrived in Boston. A bloody persecution sprung up against them in the few years following, and four were put to death. It was still later in the century, 1692, that the horrible proceedings against witchcraft took place in Salem, where many were most unjustly hanged, and many more tortured into confession of abominable falsehoods. It is well to remember this when

we grow indignant over the persecution of the Huguenots in France. Further north, in Acadie, or Nova Scotia, and Canada, the French had already explored the St. Lawrence and the great lakes, made some feeble settlements, and converted some of the Indians. Their missionaries and adventurers were full of heroism and zeal. Later in the century they discovered the Mississippi, and claimed all the territory in that Western region from its source to its mouth, calling it, after the great king, Louisiana.

In England, 1650 saw Oliver Cromwell in pretty complete possession of power, Charles I having been beheaded the year before. In 1651 the royal army was totally defeated at Worcester, and Charles II soon after escaped in disguise to France to come back triumphantly in 1660, when the Lord Protector had passed away. During the Commonwealth Roman Catholics were deprived of the privilege of voting or holding office, and the use of the Prayer-book was forbidden to Episcopalians. It was in the short reign of James II (1685-88) that Judge Jeffreys wrote his name with letters of blood. in the annals of English history. When the people turned to William of Orange, the perfidious and tyrannical James was forced to flee with his family to France, and spent the remainder of his days at St. Germain, a pensioner on the bounty of Louis XIV. Anne, the younger daughter of James II, reigned over England from 1701 to 1714.

On the continent of Europe the terrible Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) between Protestants and Catholics, memorable for the brave deeds of Gustavus Adolphus, had just closed in the Peace of Westphalia, by which Brandenburg—the forerunner of Prussia—was enlarged, and Saxony strengthened, while Switzerland and the low countries, or Netherlands, were acknowledged as independent States. The Belgic Provinces, between the Netherlands and France, divided among themselves, remained submissive to Spain and the Roman Catholic Church. They became involved in the wars attending the decline of the Spanish monarchy, and during the remainder of the century were the theater of fierce struggles between contending armies, and were subjected to many changes of boundaries.

Central Europe, where were the States of Bohemia, Bavaria, Moravia, Austria, and smaller principalities, was loosely confederated into the German Empire under the Imperial Diet at Frankfort. Ferdinand III at this time held the imperial dignity. His death was followed by the long reign of Leopold I (1657-1705). He attacked the Turks on the East and the French monarch on the West. From the former he obtained a great stretch of territory, and in the combination which kept down the towering ambition of the latter he was one of the chief factors. In the North was the strong kingdom of Sweden—soon to be made still stronger by the victories of Charles X—and the weak king-

dom of Denmark. On the East were Poland and Russia and the Turk. On the South were Spain, Portugal, and Italy. Portugal, after a most honorable history had been annexed by Philip II to the Spanish realm; but in 1640, after a forced union of one hundred and sixty years, it was freed by a bold and successful conspiracy of the nobles, from all connection with Spain, although its independence was not formally recognized till 1668. Spain had wholly lost her former headship in European politics and was in a bad way under the last rulers of the Hapsburg dynasty, bigoted, intolerant, incompetent; disordered finances, impaired industries—due largely to the barbarous expulsion of the Moors—and inferior military forces left her in the second rank of powers.

Italy was a mere geographical expression, the territory being split up under the rule of petty princes largely swayed by foreign influence; much of the country indeed was under direct foreign dominion. Among the native rulers the Dukes of Savoy were perhaps the most enterprising and successful. Venice maintained a fair degree of prosperity. Naples was an appanage of the Spanish crown. The popes had larger territorial possessions, in the center of the country, than at any previous or subsequent time. But this local importance was more than offset by loss in the larger sphere of influence and prerogative. Convenience, indeed, occasionally led a prominent sovereign to

submit some question to the papal judgment; but in many instances his wishes were openly disregarded, and in the leading questions of European politics no deference was paid him.

An interesting episode occurring just at this time perhaps deserves mention. Queen Christina of Sweden, the talented but eccentric daughter of the great Gustavus Adolphus, in 1654 abdicated her throne in favor of her cousin, quitted the land of her fathers, was solemnly admitted into the Roman Catholic Church at Innspruck, and established her permanent residence in Rome till her death in 1689. The pope, Alexander VII, considered it the special distinction of his pontificate that he was permitted to welcome so distinguished a convert; but she did not prove in all things wholly satisfactory, not finding matters quite as she expected—a frequent experience in such cases. To Gilbert Burnet, the English Bishop of Salisbury, who paid her a visit, she said, "It was certain that the Church was governed by the immediate care of God, for none of the four popes that she had known since she came to Rome had common sense." She called them "the first and the last of men."

The history of France during the period in which Fénelon flourished must be given at somewhat greater length if we would properly comprehend the part which he took on the stage of action. And especially must we attend to the character of Louis XIV, with whom Fénelon was brought into

such exceeding close and fateful relations. Louis came to the throne in 1643, but as he was then only five years old he did not assume personal charge of the government. Cardinal Mazarin, who had succeeded the great Richelieu at his death in 1642, was chief minister in the Council of State which advised the Queen Mother and regent, Anne of Austria. On the death of Mazarin in 1661, Louis took supreme direction of affairs, and retained it until his death in 1715. It was a very long and, in some respects, a very successful reign, the most illustrious in French annals; a sort of Solomonic era, to be compared with the age of Pericles in Greece, Augustus in Rome, and Elizabeth in England. It was brilliant in many directions; an age of conquest and the extension of territory abroad; an age of great personalities in literature and art at home. Among the latter are the well-known names of Corneille, the tragic poet; Moliere, the master of comedy; Racine, La Fontaine, La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyere, Pascal, Malebranche, and Madame de Sévigné. Voltaire and Rousseau were born during this reign, but mainly flourished later. Among eminent painters were Poussin, Claude Lorrain, Lebrun, and Mignard. As architects, Mansart and Perrault were famous; among sculptors, Piget; among composers, Lulli. Celebrated in the pulpit were Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Massillon, and Flechier; as Church historians, Natalis Alexander, Fleury, and Tillemont. In the field the prestige of

the French armies was upheld by the genius of Turenne, Condé, Vauban, Luxemburg, and Catinat. Under these marshals many victories were won in an almost constant succession of wars with Spain, Holland, England, the Empire, and other antagonists. The peace which Louis dictated to Europe at Nimeguen, February 5, 1679, raised him to his highest point of power and glory. The headship of the world seemed to be within his grasp, if indeed it was not already attained. His courtiers worshiped him as a demigod; two triumphal arches were erected to his honor in Paris; foreign governments regarded him with keen apprehension or with servile awe. He excited wonder and fear throughout the continent, for his ambitious projects of still vaster dominion seemed to threaten the safety and independence of all his neighbors. He was possessed of a strong mind, a resolute will, considerable sagacity and penetration, much aptitude for business, and an indefatigable industry. His powers of application were remarkable. When he gave direction in 1661 that he would be his own prime minister, that all business should pass through his hands, and all questions be decided directly by himself, every one expected that he would soon tire of the drudgery which this would impose; but he kept it up till the end of his life, laboring regularly in his cabinet eight hours a day. He had the most extravagant ideas of the royal prerogative. He was an absolute, irresponsible monarch, accustomed

to say and mean, "The State: it is myself." Even the property of the realm he considered as his. In an instruction to his son he declared, "Kings are absolute lords and have naturally the full and free disposal of all the goods possessed, as well by Churchmen as by laymen, to use them at all times according to the general need of their State." Having this conception of his power, regarding his authority as delegated immediately from heaven, he surrounded himself with those who would be subservient to his will, and the one avenue of advancement was his favor; without this, virtue and merit had little or no chance of recognition. He made his court at Versailles a very splendid one, everywhere praised and admired as the model of taste and refinement. It became the center of fashion for Europe, and the only place of high attraction in the kingdom. Henri Martin, in his "History of France," says: "Whoever had once tasted this life so brilliant, so animated, so varied, could no longer quit it and return to his native manor without dying of languor and ennui. Everything seemed cold and dead away from this place of enjoyment, which appeared, to town and province, as the very ideal of human life." It is estimated that a sum, equal to more than 400,000,000 francs at the present rate, was laid out on the palaces and pleasure-grounds of Versailles, transforming an unsightly district into fairy-land.

Was this Louis XIV, then, a really great man?

Not when tried by tests that go far and reach deep. As one has said: "His claim to renown lies more in the diligent and tireless ambition with which he improved favoring circumstances than in the creation of great results out of small means by force of personal genius and energy. It is also a limiting factor in our estimate of Louis that he exercised no care to husband the resources of his country, and sacrificed to thirst for personal display the chances of future prosperity. This imposing and brilliant reign left France exhausted and harboring within herself the germs of violent revolution." In the latter part of his reign the coalition against him under Marlborough and Prince Eugene proved eminently successful, and much of his ill-gotten acquisitions had to be disgorged. Moreover, his reign was also a failure in that, for the sake of slight and temporary gains on the continent of Europe, he threw away the opportunity to forestall in Asia and America the progress of England, so soon to pass France in the race for world supremacy, and left his kingdom, at the close of his reign, exhausted and crippled, in no condition to enter upon the decisive stage of the great conflict whose approach he did not foresee. Before his burial the eyes of Frenchmen had begun to be open to the shadowy side of his reign; the glamour and the glory could no longer hide the tyranny and the shame, and very few mourned at the death of the magnificent despot. He was far from great also in

his private life; for that was, for a long time, one of unblushing licentiousness. Different mistresses were made successively, and in part simultaneously, the rivals of his dishonored queen, Maria Theresa of Spain, who died in 1683. No less than ten children were born to him out of wedlock, and publicly acknowledged. After the death of his queen he did somewhat better, being privately married to Madame de Maintenon, as already noted.

The cruel persecutions of the Huguenots must also be set down against the king, although in this, surely, we should make much allowance because of the feeling of the age in such matters—a feeling not by any means the same as in our day. Louis, like many others before and since, endeavored to atone for the excesses and frailties of his private life by his public zeal for orthodoxy, fancying that the slaughter of heretics would offset his adulteries. His crowning crime was the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. By this arbitrary act of unprovoked despotism he annulled forever all the highly prized privileges granted to the Huguenots, after their large sufferings and heroic efforts in self-defense, by Henry IV and Louis XIII. He absolutely prohibited the exercise of their religion throughout the kingdom, with the sole exception of Alsace; ordered their temples to be leveled with the ground, and their ministers to quit France within fifteen days; forbade the people to follow their pastors into exile under pain of confiscation and condemnation

to the galleys; and required their children to be baptized henceforth by the Catholic priests and educated as members of the Established Church. Before this, in the earlier years of the reign, stringent measures had been set in operation for the conversion of the Protestants and the establishment of uniformity of faith and Church government throughout the kingdom. Louis was intolerant of dissent, partly from political motives. He could not brook that any of his subjects should exercise so much independence and freedom of thought as was involved in worshiping God or thinking about Him after a different pattern from the one set by himself. They ought all to take their opinions from the throne, he held, in religious as well as in secular matters, and because they did not they were extremely objectionable and dangerous. As early as 1656 a disposition was shown to interpret the Edict of Nantes—given by Henry IV, April 15, 1598—in a narrow partisan fashion, to the disadvantage of the Protestants. Numbers of the Reformed places of worship were shut up on frivolous pretenses. The worshipers were excluded from all public functions, from the liberal professions, from the universities, from engaging in various branches of commerce and industry. They were forbidden to intermarry with Catholics, and their children were encouraged to forsake the faith of their parents by being declared capable of choosing for themselves at the age of seven years. Every sort of

pressure was applied. A Bureau of Conversions was established under the direction of the Minister Pelissier, who disbursed the funds intrusted to him at the rate of six livres for every abjuration of the Reformed religion. Milder measures not proving sufficiently efficacious and speedy, more severe and savage means were employed. Dragoons were sent into the disturbed districts and quartered on the inhabitants; they were permitted, and even encouraged, to abandon themselves to every kind of brutal license, violence, and excess, establishing a veritable reign of terror wherever they appeared. It is no wonder that, under these horrors, wearied and worried well-nigh to death by such intolerable impositions, great numbers of Huguenots recanted, nominally, although, of course, their real beliefs were not changed. And when the protecting Edict was formally revoked, still more fearful cruelties followed. Multitudes of the Reformed, obstinately refusing obedience, were consigned to loathsome dungeons, racked with exquisite tortures, and treated with every kind of outrage short of actual murder. Numbers of females were immured for life in convents; infants were torn from the arms of their mothers; their property was destroyed, and whole districts were laid waste. How far the king was strictly responsible for the whole of these horrors is a matter of some question; but it is certain that he received with great satisfaction the chorus of congratulations, on this memorable Cath-

olic triumph, from the court sycophants, who hailed him as the new Constantine, and who included in their number such men as Bossuet, Massillon, Racine, and La Fontaine. But Louis inflicted almost as deadly a blow upon his country by these persecutions as the rulers of Spain had upon theirs when they drove out the Moors and Jews. France robbed herself of her best citizens, the most enterprising and industrious of her skilled artisans. They fled abroad to the number of at least a quarter of a million, escaping from France to enrich England, Holland, and other countries with the fruits of their labors. Among them was the Duke of Schomberg, one of the best generals of his time, who placed his sword at the disposal of the Prince of Orange. Many also who remained were so crippled and depressed that they could no longer render their best service. Moreover, a bitter and profound resentment was kindled in the Protestant States of Europe, which acted very unfavorably upon the foreign relations of France, and strengthened the hands of the coalition against her. So, in every sense, the policy must be adjudged a mistaken one, counting against the greatness of the king.

It is important to inquire what was the state of the French Church at this period. It is impossible, of course, for us to enter into extended details, but we can hardly understand either Fénelon or his times without knowing something about the ecclesiastical religious questions which were then agitat-

ing the public mind. Religion was by no means in a stagnant state, or treated with indifference and apathy; it everywhere excited keenest attention. No subject was more eagerly discussed or occupied a larger share of thought. Besides the general controversy between Protestants and Romanists, there were many divisions in the ranks of the latter. There was fierce conflict between the Jesuits and Jansenists, also between the Gallicans and Ultramontanists. For a full recital of the story our readers will be obliged to consult Church histories and cyclopedias.

Of the Jesuits little need here be said; their history is very well known. Established by Ignatius Loyola in 1540, the system was, in the period we are considering, something over a hundred years old, and numbering about fifteen thousand members, of whom half were priests. Its leading purposes were the overthrow of Protestantism and the strengthening of the papacy. It had a magnificent organization, it largely controlled the education of the youth of the better classes of society, and it was intensely zealous in missionary operations, Francis Xavier, so illustrious in this matter, being one of its original founders. In politics it often favored popular rights, especially if it would benefit the papacy by reducing the power of the sovereign; yet it usually secured control over the princes by obtaining their ear in the confessional. In doctrine it was opposed to Augustinianism, and in

ethics became notorious for most dangerous looseness. It should not be forgotten, however, that the order had at all times many members eminent for piety and strict morality, some of the highest saints being numbered with them. In France the important office of confessor to the king was filled by members of this order under Henry IV, Louis XIII, XIV, XV; and, of course, in this way an enormous influence was exercised upon the royal policy at home and abroad. The connivance of these confessors with the scandalous lives of the kings did more than anything else to undermine respect for the Roman Catholic Church and for religion in general among the educated classes. Between the Jesuits and Jansenists there was fierce war.

The latter took their name from Bishop Cornelius Jansen, of Ypern, who died in 1638, after devoting his whole life to the study of the works of St. Augustine. His followers were Augustinians in the fullest sense of the term, accepting the extreme doctrines of election and predestination which are known among Protestants as Calvinism; but this in no way predisposed them to favor the Huguenots. On the contrary they seemed to hate them all the more because of this manifest approach to them in some of their principles, partly because it exposed them to a galling criticism from the Jesuits. The Jansenists in many ways recommend themselves to our approval. They opposed a simply formal righteousness, insisted on the necessity

for an inward preparation to receive benefits from the sacraments, and laid stress upon the reading of the Scriptures. In regard to morals, they advocated rigid self-discipline, were foes of luxury, the theater, and other doubtful or noxious pleasures. They also had more independence than most classes of society. They were not ready to surrender everything to the absolute sovereignty of the king; they stood for liberty in the Church. In point of ability and culture they furnished some of the best minds of France, and some of the best models of literary excellence which the age could boast. Blaise Pascal, whose "Provincial Letters" (1656) against the Jesuits inflicted upon them so severe a blow by their scathing exposures, was of this party. So was De Sacy, who translated the Bible into the version in general use; and Antoine Arnauld, the celebrated scholar and Doctor of the Sorbonne, the theological department of the University of Paris. His sister, Jacqueline, became abbess of the convent of Port Royal near Paris, and made it renowned for its purity and piety. Jansenism or "Calvinistic Catholicism," as it has been called, finally went down before its enemies, the popes deciding against it more than once. On many accounts it deserved a better fate; but we can not regret that such a travesty of Christianity as the sole salvation of an arbitrarily limited and eternally selected few was as conclusively defeated in the Roman Catholic Church as it has since been in the Protestant.

The Jesuits were Ultramontanes; that is, they did everything they could to strengthen the authority from beyond the mountains, residing in the city on the Tiber. The Jansenists favored Gallicanism. A few words are necessary about this latter, for it had a large place in the discussions of the time, and echoes of it have continued to our day, the long conflict coming to an end in the recent rupture of the Concordat between France and the Vatican. The quarrel is of very long standing. It is historically certain that at a very early period the National Church of France had a character of freedom peculiar to itself. The Frankish Church in the time of Charlemagne gave evidence of a spirit and temper obviously different from the Italian ideal of the Church as organized under the popes. The French Parliaments from time to time manfully resisted encroachments on their powers or those of their kings, from beyond the mountains. As early as 1269, Louis IX of France issued an edict—so it is alleged—called the Pragmatic Sanction, in which he strove to protect the freedom of Church elections and the rights of patrons from the interference of the popes, and forbade papal taxation without the consent of the monarch. This conflict went on through the centuries with various incidents and differing results, which need not here be followed, although it is a very interesting story. In the time of Louis XIV matters naturally came to a head through the determination of that monarch to ex-

tend his absolute authority over the Church as well as the State, and through the support which he received from the strong feeling of nationality which dominated the French people during his reign, Louis's aim was to exercise such power in ecclesiastical matters in France as Henry VIII had taken to himself in England, but not to effect a complete rupture with Rome. In particular he determined to enforce the right of the crown to the revenue and the patronage connected with vacant sees, which had long been exercised over a large part of the realm; he insisted on extending it to all the provinces. An assembly of the clergy was called in 1682, under the lead of Bossuet, the chief champion of the king in these matters. Four important articles formulating the opposition of France to the high claims of the papacy were drawn up by Bossuet, subscribed to by this assembly, and confirmed by the civil authorities. They contained in substance the following specifications: (1) The pope's authority, as also that of the Church in general, is confined to things spiritual. He has no prerogative to depose kings and princes or to release their subjects from allegiance. (2) The decrees promulgated at Constance respecting the authority of Ecumenical Councils subsist in full force. (3) In the use of his power the pope must respect the ecclesiastical canons, as also such constitutions as are received in the kingdom and Church of France. (4) While the pope has the principal voice

in matters of faith, his judgment is subject to amendment until it has been approved by the Church.

Bossuet, the leading spirit of this assembly, and indeed the most powerful and commanding Churchman of his day, esteemed the boasted infallibility of the pope a baseless fiction. He allowed that indefectibility belongs to the chair of Peter in the sense that heresy can not find there any continuous and stubborn support. But this, he maintained, in no wise precluded a temporary aberration of the individual pontiff or the competency of the universal Church to administer correction to the pontiff. Such principles had been at home in France ever since the era of the great Reform Councils of the fifteenth century. The pope—Innocent XI was then in the chair—was highly incensed, and refused confirmation to those members of the assembly of 1682 whom the king nominated to episcopal sees. Affairs remained in a very unsettled condition for a considerable interval, no mode of accommodation being reached, each party standing its ground; but in 1691 the French Church found itself with thirty-five bishoprics vacant, and the king allowed the twelve signers of the declaration whom he had nominated as bishops, but whom the pope had thus far refused to recognize as such, to retract all that had displeased the pontiff. The pope also gained some advantage from the bitter partisan conflicts within the Gallican Church during the closing years of Louis XIV.

As to the amount of spiritual life in the Church during these years it is not so easy to acquire reliable information as it is concerning the more outward events. But there are many indications that it was very considerable, that the Roman Catholic Church at that period was in a very much better state than it is at present. There was an evident desire among a large number of its clergy to rid it of its gross superstitions. They opposed some of its absurdities, omitted many of its ridiculous ceremonies, endeavored to render Catholicism more rational and intelligent, more Scriptural and pious. There are tokens that France had then a very large number of true followers of the Savior; some in elevated stations whose virtues shine afar, but many more in obscure positions, God's hidden ones, known only to Him and to those immediately around them. Among the more prominent of the writers on spiritual subjects flourishing at this time in France may be mentioned Antoinette Bourignon (died 1680), whose published works amount to twenty-five volumes: one of her hymns, "Come, Savior, Jesus, from above," translated by John Wesley, is in our Hymnal, No. 379. Peter Poiret (died in 1719), court preacher of the Palatine, was an admirer of Madame Bourignon, whose works he published; he also brought out the works of Madame Guyon in thirty-nine volumes; he was both a philosopher and a deeply pious man. The Baron de Renty (1611-1649) was a man of the profoundest

spirituality, greatly admired by Wesley, who spoke of him in the highest terms, and published his life. Alphonsus de Sarasa (died in 1666) gave to the world "The Art of Always Rejoicing," a beautiful book, filled with the deepest Christian philosophy. The Abbé Guilloré, also a contemporary of Fénelon and belonging to the same school of piety, left to the world as his monument a treatise on "Self-Renunciation," or the "Art of Dying to Self and Living for the Love of Jesus." And Nicholas Herman, better known as Brother Lawrence, admitted, in 1666, as a lay brother among the barefooted Carmelites at Paris, is still known in the realm of pure and undefiled religion by his letters on "The Practice of the Presence of God," published at the instance of the Cardinal de Noailles. St. Vincent de Paul (died 1660), to mention but one more of these illustrious names, founder of the order of Sisters of Charity, was a philanthropist of the first rank. Neglected children, condemned criminals, prisoners of the cell and the galley, all classes of the poor and the unfortunate, received from him a sympathy as practical as it was warm and persevering. Consecrated activity he regarded as the essence of religion. The spirit of his life is well expressed in his own words: "The genuine mark of loving God is a good and perfect action. It is only our works which accompany us into the other life." From all this it is seen that the age and land which produced Fénelon had many other sons and daughters of very similar excellence.

CHAPTER III.

PRECEPTOR TO THE PRINCE.

Louis XIV, being bent upon the subjection of the Huguenots, and knowing full well that violence alone could accomplish the matter only in part, cast about in his mind for a suitable person to undertake the milder rôle of persuasion. Fénelon had already attracted notice both by his good work at the community of New Catholics and also by the treatise which he had written in defense of the Apostolic Succession. So when Bossuet suggested him as a suitable commissioner for the districts of Poitou and Saintonge, in the West, not far from the Protestant stronghold of La Rochelle, districts where great confusion and irritation prevailed, and where only a tender, judicious hand could hope to guide matters, the king very gladly made the appointment. Fénelon, before accepting it, made two stipulations. One was that he should be allowed to choose his fellow-workers. He selected the Abbé de Langeron, his lifelong friend, the Abbé Fleury, the well-known historian, the Abbé Bertier, and the Abbé Milon, who later on became respectively Bishops of Blois and of Condom. The other stipulation was that the troops, together with all that

savored of military terrorism, should be withdrawn before he entered on what should be solely a work of peace and mercy. There had been terrible doings and violent outrages with which Fénelon could have no sympathy. There is no doubt whatever upon this point. His own words are abundantly on record. Although the country was so disturbed, he positively refused a military escort; and when the king represented the danger he might be exposed to, he answered: "Sire, ought a missionary to fear danger? If you hope for an apostolical harvest, we must go in the true character of apostles. I would rather perish by the hands of my mistaken brethren than see one of them exposed to the inevitable violence of the military." In a letter to a duke he says, "The work of God is not effected in the heart by force; that is not the true spirit of the Gospel."

He had the extremely difficult task of showing to Protestants whose property had been pillaged, whose families had been scattered, whose blood had been shed like water, the truth and excellence of the religion of their persecutors. That this could be done to any very extensive degree might well be questioned. But the missionaries were characterized by ability, mildness, prudence, benevolence, and sound judgment, and they did all that any reasonable persons could expect. The people of these provinces were amazed to see men of high birth and position leaving the court and capital to come

among them. They supposed that, at all events, such men would be luxurious and haughty, as they had been told; but when, on the contrary, they saw the missionaries nothing but lowly, self-denying, simple-mannered priests, whose real aims seemed to be the temporal as well as spiritual advantage of those among whom they lived, prejudice began to melt away. In February, 1686—the mission began in December, 1685, and lasted till July, 1686, being renewed for a few months in the next year, May to July, 1687—Fénelon wrote to the Marquis de Seignelai, Secretary of State, and brother to the Duchess de Beauvilliers: "In the present condition of men's minds we could easily bring them all to confession and communion if we chose to use a little pressure and so glorify our mission. But what is the good of bringing men to confession who do not yet recognize the Church? How can we give Jesus Christ to those who do not believe they are receiving Him? We should expect to bring a terrible curse upon us if we were satisfied with hasty, superficial work, all meant for show. We can but multiply our instructions, invite the people to come heartily to sacraments, but give them only to those who come of their own accord to seek them in unreserved submission. I must not forget to add that we want a great quantity of books, especially New Testaments." Again he writes later: "The corn you have sent so cheaply proves to the people that our charity is practical. It is the most persuasive

kind of controversy. It amazes them, for they see the exact reverse of all their ministers have taught them as incontrovertibly true. We need preachers to explain the Gospel every Sunday with a loving, winning authority; people brought up in dissent are only to be won by the words spoken to them. We must give New Testaments profusely everywhere, but they must be in large type; the people can not read small print. We can not expect them to buy Catholic books. It is a great thing if they will read what costs them nothing; indeed the greater proportion can not afford to buy." He wrote also to Bossuet in March, 1686, "Our converts get on, but very slowly; it is no trifling matter to change the opinions of a whole people." It is very evident that Fénelon had the most sincere desire for the conversion of the Protestants, believing, of course, as he did, from the bottom of his heart, that they were destined to eternal woe. Brought up in the atmosphere in which he was, he could not possibly sympathize with their position, could not regard their heroism as other than obstinacy. But such was the natural mildness of his disposition and his acquaintance with the demands of genuine religion, that he could in no way be content with a merely nominal acquiescence or consent, and with the use of that force by which such acquiescence was obtained.

His mission to Saintonge has been called a dark page in his life. Yet the strongly prejudiced writer

who so characterizes it says in the same connection, after referring to Fénelon's firm stand against violence and the forcing of conscience: "To us this measure of clemency seems bare and scanty enough; in Fénelon's own time it was both unusual and effective. His counsels of mercy had weight with the minister, and led to the suppression of various abuses, civil as well as ecclesiastical. They manifestly gained for him the affection of his proselytes, and, stirring up against him the bile of the more rigid Catholics, seem to have stood in the way of his promotion to the bishopric." It was a little after this that he was appointed to the See of Poitiers, which was the chief city of Poitou, but De Harlai, who by this time was anything but a friend, succeeded in getting it immediately revoked; and the next year the archbishop was again successful in his unworthy maneuvers. The Bishop of Rochelle had been greatly impressed by the zeal and gentle wisdom of the young missioner, and he now came to Paris, without giving Fénelon any hint of his intention, to ask the king to appoint him as Coadjutor Bishop of Rochelle. It would have been done but for the insinuations of De Harlai that the attraction between the two men was a mutual leaning to Jansenism, and as this was always a sore point with Louis, he at once refused to make the appointment. Fénelon might easily have refuted these assertions —for there was not a word of truth in them, as his close friendship with Bossuet, Tronson, and others,

showed—but he did not take the trouble so to do. He was not ambitious of dignities.

Was his mission to Saintonge and Poitou a dark page in his history? We can hardly look upon it in this light. It seems to us that he comes out of it with considerable credit. Can we take it amiss in him that he was a stanch adherent of the Roman Catholic Church, not only at this time, but throughout all his life? Not if we are reasonable, and do not demand miracles where there is no occasion for expecting them. Shall we withhold our admiration from those who do not rise entirely superior to all their surroundings, and see things as we, in totally different conditions, see them? In that case, dealt with after so harsh a judgment, we ourselves might come off badly, and we should most certainly have to bar out from our favor a very large proportion of the men who have done the most for the world's advancement.

It was about this same time that Sir Matthew Hale in England (he died in 1676)—who was reckoned the best judge of his time, acute, learned, sensible, setting himself strongly against bribery, one of the serious vices of his age, a friend of Richard Baxter, an austere scholar, leaning to the side of the Puritans—sentenced women to be executed for witchcraft, and sent John Bunyan to jail for frequenting conventicles, politely dismissing, without redress, his wife, who pleaded for his discharge. And in our own time we have seen the Earl of

Shaftesbury, who did such wonderful things for the oppressed in some directions, most bitter against the reformers in all other lines except his own, the stanchest of Tories, and the most rigid of Churchmen, denouncing the democratic principle as anti-Christian, and upholding the infamous Conventicle Act, which forbade worship in a private house by more than twenty persons. Similar inconsistencies can be pointed out in the record of nearly all good men. What does it prove? Simply that it is given to very few to rise much above the age in which they live, or to be at all points independent of the impress placed upon them in their early years. We see no reason to believe that Fénelon's attitude toward the Protestants of his day was other than an entirely sincere and conscientious one, such as might be fairly looked for in a person of his surroundings.

It is possible to impute sinister and selfish motives to any, if one is so disposed, but we see no benefit from this policy. It is not the way we would wish to be treated ourselves. Almost every act of a man's life is susceptible of an evil construction, if sufficient pains is taken and sufficient force applied. But we can not join with those who appear to delight in pulling down from their pedestals all that have been lifted above their fellows in goodness by the general suffrage of mankind. Truth, of course, is to be sought at all costs. But it makes a vast difference from what standpoint the facts are ap-

proached, whether with suspicion and aversion, or cordial appreciation and comprehension. There is often an underlying dislike to a certain type of character or to certain sentiments and opinions, because of the wide difference between them and those which the writer himself holds and practices, which makes it impossible that he should see them in an unbiased light. We can not escape the conclusion that Fénelon has been treated by some recent writers in this manner, and we protest against its unfairness.

It may be truthfully said that Fénelon, while doing faithfully what appeared to him the duty of the hour on this mission, did not particularly enjoy it. He had no love for life in the country or for the work in which he was engaged. He longed for the quiet of his former post, with its larger opportunities for study and reflection, and for the time when he should be free to return to Paris. In a letter to Bossuet he playfully threatens to bring suspicion of heresy upon himself or "incur a lucky disgrace" that might give him excuse for his recall. He was permitted, shortly after this, to go back to his place at the New Catholics, where for some two years more he occupied himself in a quiet, inconspicuous manner. Summing up the results of his controversial work among the Huguenots, we are disposed to conclude, with one of his biographers, that "if his moderation and humanity in an age in which such qualities were not esteemed, were re-

membered against him when other clouds were gathering, and contributed to his ultimate ruin, they add no less grace to the record of his life, and must have deepened his influence with those whose eyes were undimmed by prejudice and bigotry."

The most important period in the life of Fénelon was now to begin; that for which the earlier years were but a preparation; that which would color and dominate all his succeeding days. The time had come when the little grandson of the king, the Duke of Burgundy, the hope of France (for his father, the dauphin, was a failure, wholly incompetent to fill any large place), should pass from the hands of nurses to masculine rule. What could be of greater importance, considering how much was at stake for the kingdom, than the proper selection of those who should take this weighty charge? When the dauphin had been at a similar stage of his education he was committed to the care of the Duke de Montausier and Bossuet as the greatest and most celebrated men of their day. But though they did their best, the course they took was not in all respects well advised, and the results, at least, had not been satisfactory. This would make the utmost care now all the more imperative. Happily the king was fully alive to his responsibility, and, in addition to his own penetration, had the benefit of good counsel in the matter. Madame de Maintenon was now a power at court, and was using her influence in the best directions. She was a warm

friend of the Duke de Beauvilliers, who also stood high in the good graces of Louis; for the monarch, in spite of his own serious lapses from virtue, admired it in others, and knew its importance with the young. The duke was accordingly made governor of the royal grandchildren, Burgundy and his two younger brothers, with unlimited power of nominating all the other officers about them and all the inferior attendants. He had no hesitation as to the best preceptor France could produce for the little prince, and immediately named Fénelon, a choice which was loudly applauded by the public throughout the kingdom. The people said that Louis the Great had once more outshone all earlier monarchs, and shown himself wiser than Phillip of Macedon when he appointed Aristotle tutor to his son. Bossuet was overjoyed at the good fortune of Church and State, and regretted only that the Marquis de Fénelon had not lived to see an elevation of the merit which hid itself with so much care. It was a great surprise to the recipient, who was leading his ordinary retired life, neither seeking nor expecting court favor. It was a great gratification to his friends, who poured in lavish congratulations. But M. Tronson, the wise old tutor from St. Sulpice, wrote that his joy was mixed with fear, considering the perils to which his favorite pupil would now be exposed. He says: "It opens the door to earthly greatness, but you must fear lest it should close that of the real greatness of heaven. You are

thrown into a region where the Gospel of Jesus Christ is little known, and where even those who know it use their knowledge chiefly as a means to win human respect. If ever the study and meditation of Holy Scripture were necessary to you, now indeed they have become overwhelmingly indispensable. Above all, it is of infinite importance that you never lose sight of the final hour of death, when all this world's glory will fade away like a dream, and every earthly stay on which you may have leaned must fail." This counsel was most creditable to both tutor and pupil, showing a love stronger than ordinary friendship. The post which seemed so dazzling and so promising did indeed prove one of much danger as well as glory, but not exactly in the way that the aged teacher anticipated.

The Duke of Burgundy, now seven years old, was, in the most emphatic sense, an *enfant terrible.* He was very different from his heavy, stupid father, inheriting some of his qualities, it is said, from his mother, Mary Anne of Bavaria, a delicate, melancholy, unattractive princess, passionate, proud, and caustic. Burgundy was a frail, unhealthy creature, whose body lacked symmetry as well as his mind. One shoulder very early outgrew the other, defying the most cruel efforts of the surgeons to set it right, and doing serious mischief to his general health. His nervous system was much deranged, so that he was subject to hurricanes of passion. The least contradiction made him furious.

He would fall into ungovernable fits of rage even against inanimate objects. He had an insatiable appetite for all sorts of pleasure. His pride and arrogance were indescribable. Mankind he looked upon as atoms with whom he had nothing in common; his brothers were only intermediate beings between him and the human race. He had a quick, penetrating mind, and a marvelous memory. He was stiff against threats, on his guard against flattery, amenable only to reason; but by no means always to that. Often when it reasserted itself, after one of his tornadoes, he was so much ashamed of himself that he fell into a new fit of rage. He was, however, frank and truthful in the extreme.

Such was the prince who—with his brothers, the Duke of Anjou, afterwards Philip V of Spain, and the Duke of Berri—was committed entirely to the care of Fénelon. When he accepted his new appointment he abandoned all other offices and occupations, permitting himself no distractions even of friendship, that he might concentrate all his powers of insight and reflection upon his charges. Now, indeed, his studies of education would be fully tested, and on the most conspicuous conceivable field his theories must be reduced to practice. It is said that "he pursued only one system, which was to have none." In other words, he devoted his fertile mind to meeting the necessities of the hour as they arose in his volatile, chameleon-like pupil, instead of subjecting him to a Procrustean system

which could only have had the worst outcome. His facile pen was employed without stint in the service of his pupil. Many fables, some in French, some in Latin, full of poetry and grace, were written to convey special lessons to the little duke. "Dialogues of the Dead" also were composed for the same purpose, bringing in the principal personages of antiquity to converse on such themes as would instruct in regard to history and morals. And all this was but a preparation for "Telemaque," or Telemachus, composed for the instruction of the heir to the throne, and endowed with such unfailing charm by the beauty of its style and the admirable nature of its sentences, that it has been read ever since in many nations and by many classes. The same mythology is employed in it that was used by Homer and Virgil, but refined by the knowledge of the Divine revelation and adorned by a tincture of Christianity that runs easily through the whole narrative. The best classical and moral maxims are placed before the mind of the reader, animated with love and heightened with action. The author shows that the glory of a prince is to govern men in such a way as to make them good and happy; that his authority is never so firmly established as in the love of his people; that the true riches and prosperity of a State consists in taking away what ministers to general luxury, and in being content with innocent and simple pleasures.

But, as may well be supposed, it was not the in-

tellectual means alone—the text-books that were prepared, the treatises that were written, the pains taken with instruction—which most awaken our admiration, but rather the good sense shown in the various special expedients that were employed as from time to time they were found adapted to the needs of the case. Every effort was made to relieve study from tedium. Lessons were abandoned whenever the prince wished to begin a conversation from which he might derive useful information. There were frequent intervals for exercise. Learning was turned into a pleasure. The real struggle was with his fiery temperament, which had been hitherto so badly mismanaged, and which could only be met by patience and gentleness with firmness. When one of the evil moods seized him, it was an understood thing in the household that every one should relapse into an unwonted silence. Nobody spoke to him if they could help it; his attendants waited upon him with averted eyes as though reluctant to witness his degradation through passion. He was treated with the sort of humiliating compassion which might be shown to a madman; his books and appliances for study were put aside as useless to one in such a state, and he was left to his own reflections. Such a course was the destruction of self-complacency; he ceased to find relief in swearing when his hearers ceased to be disconcerted by his abuse, and, being left to consider the situation in solitude, he saw himself for the first time as others saw him. Gradually this treatment

would bring the passionate but generous child to a better mind, and then, full of remorse and penitence, he would come to throw himself with the fullest affection and trust upon the never-failing patience and goodness of the preceptor, whom he almost worshiped to his dying day.

Fénelon had studied childhood, and knew how deeply rooted is the child's fear of ridicule; in the prince it was exaggerated by his abnormal vanity, and a system which showed him how he degraded himself, and lost all shadow of dignity when he lost his self-control, was the surest to produce a radical reform. There are still in existence two pledges of his childish repentance, testifying to the difficulty with which his faults were conquered. "I promise, on my word as a prince to M. l'Abbé de Fénelon, that I will do at once whatever he bids me, and will obey him instantly in what he forbids; and if I break my word I will accept any kind of punishment and disgrace. Given at Versailles, November 29, 1689. Louis." This promise, in spite of the word of a prince, was probably broken; for many months later he enters on another engagement pathetic in its brevity: "Louis, who promises afresh to keep his promise better. This 20th of September, I beseech M. de Fénelon to take it again." He was at this time but eight years old. The child loved his teacher passionately, and it was seldom that he did not yield speedily to Fénelon's wise and loving discipline.

Once, however, there was a serious scene between them which appears to have had a lasting influence upon the prince. Fénelon had been obliged to reprove him with more than usual severity, and the boy, in his angry pride, had resisted, exclaiming, "No, no, sir; I remember who I am, and who you are." It was impossible to pass over such a speech and maintain authority; but acting upon his own maxim, never to administer reproof while either actor concerned is excited, Fénelon made no reply, and for the remainder of the day preserved a total silence toward his pupil, who could not fail to perceive by his manner that the usually indulgent master was much displeased. Night came with no explanation. But the next morning, as soon as the prince was awake, the abbé came into his room, and, addressing him in a grave, ceremonious manner, very unlike the usual easy tone of their intercourse, said: "I do not know, Monsieur, whether you remember what you said to me yesterday, that you knew what you are and what I am; but it is my duty to teach you your ignorance alike of both. You fancy yourself a greater personage than I—some of your servants may have told you so; but since you oblige me to do it I must tell you without hesitation that I am greater than you. You must see at once that there can be no question of birth in the matter. It is one of personal merit. You can have no doubt that I am your superior in understanding and knowledge; you know nothing but

what I have taught you, and that is a mere shadow compared with what you have yet to learn. As to authority, you have none over me, whereas I, on the other hand, have full and entire authority over you, as the king has often told you. Perhaps you imagine that I think myself fortunate in holding the office I fill about yourself; but there again you are mistaken. I undertook it only to obey the king, and in no way for the irksome privilege of being your preceptor. And to convince you of this truth I am now going to take you to His Majesty and beg of him to appoint some one else whose care of you will, I hope, be more successful than mine." This was no idle threat; for Fénelon had always been determined to resign the tutorship as soon as he felt himself to be failing in it; and the prince was obliged to weigh his pride against his love. His love proved the greater; for life had been very different with him since Fénelon came into it, and no sacrifice of his vanity was too galling if he might cancel his offense and keep his friend. Moreover, he was sensitive to the last degree to public opinion and the faintest shadow of disgrace. What would the world think of a prince who was so hopelessly naughty that a man so universally admired and respected was forced to give him up, and what would become of the poor little boy to whom his nearest relatives were, after all, only "His Majesty" and "Monseigneur," if the dear, kind preceptor, who loved him and devoted himself so entirely to him,

were to go away? Poor Louis! The storm broke out anew; but this time it was of penitence and shame and regret, while with passionate sobs and tears he cried out: "O Monsieur, I am so sorry for what I did yesterday. If you tell the king he will not care for me any more; and what will people think if you leave me? I promise, O I promise ever so much, that you shall not have to complain of me if only you will promise not to go." But Fénelon would promise nothing—the lesson would be lost if it were not sharp—and for a whole day he allowed the duke to undergo the pangs of anxiety and uncertainty. But at last, when his repentance seemed unlikely to be soon forgotten, Madame de Maintenon's intercession was admitted, and the preceptor consented to remain.

At a much later date Fénelon, writing about these days to a friend, said of the prince: "He was sincere and ingenuous to a degree that one only needed to question him in order to know whatever he had done wrong. One day, when he was very much out of temper, he tried to conceal some act of disobedience, and I urged him to tell the truth, remembering that we were in God's sight. Then he threw himself into a great passion, and said, 'Why do you put it in that way? Well, then, since you ask it so, I can not deny that I did that,' whatever it was. He was beside himself with anger, but still his sense of religious duty was so strong that it drew forth the most humiliating acknowledgments.

I never corrected him save where it was really necessary, and then with great caution. The moment his passion was over he would come back to me, and confess himself to blame, so that we had to console him; and he was really grateful to those who corrected him. He used sometimes to say to me, 'Now I shall leave the Duke of Burgundy behind the door, and be only little Louis with you.' This was when he was nine years old. Directly he saw me doing any work for him he wanted to do the same, and would set to on his own account. Except in his moments of passion I never knew him influenced save by the most straightforward principles and most strictly in accordance with the teachings of the Gospel. He was kind and gracious to all who had a claim upon him; but he reserved his confidence wholly for such as he believed to be religious people, and they could tell him nothing about his faults which he did not acknowledge with gratitude. I never saw any one whom I should less have feared to displease by telling him the harshest truths concerning himself. I have proved that by some wonderful experiences."

It will be somewhat seen, we trust, from all this, how great was the care and skill expended by Fénelon on his most responsible and difficult task, and how near an approach he made to imparting a model education to his pupil. To his religious training, of course, as well as to that which was more intellectual, the greatest attention was given. It had a

large place in the many conversations held and the many books put into his hands, chief among which were the Sacred Scriptures. The law of self-denial and self-restraint was continually inculcated, that one must learn to imitate the Divine Master if one would fulfill the purpose for which life was given. The early religious impressions thus imparted were so deeply wrought that they influenced his whole after life. He was prepared with greatest care for his first communion, taking it earnestly and devoutly, and for the rest of his life he was a regular and faithful communicant, receiving the sacrament with a recollection and humility of bearing which struck all beholders. A total transformation was wrought in the royal pupil under the training given, a transformation which amazed all who were conversant with it. The Duke de Saint-Simon, speaking of what a prodigy was wrought in a marvelously short space of time, how the most terrible qualities were changed into all the opposite virtues, says: "From the beast which I have described there arose a prince affable, gentle, moderate, patient, modest, humble, austere but only to himself, attentive to his duties and sensible of their great extent. His only object appeared to be to perform all his actual duties as son and subject, and to qualify himself for his future obligations." Madame de Maintenon, in one of her letters, gives the same testimony: "We saw all those defects which alarmed us so much in the youth of the Duke of Burgundy

gradually disappear. Every year produced in him a visible increase of virtue. So much had his piety changed him that, from being the most passionate of men, he became mild, gentle, and complying; persons would have thought that mildness was his natural disposition, and that he was innately good." So great was the alteration in his character and conduct that, had he lived to ascend the throne, the whole world, as well as France in particular, would have been immensely the gainer. Hence the limitless devotion with which Fénelon gave five or six years of his life at the height of his powers entirely to the royal children and the routine of their schoolroom duties, was by no means a poor use of his great gifts and attainments. These years are extremely important, both in his own history and the history of his country.

One other point deserves mention before we pass from this interesting period of Fénelon's life. In entering on his office he laid down to himself a rule, to which he rigidly adhered, never to ask of the court a favor for himself, his friends, or his family. The virtue of this stands out the more when we consider how very rare in those days was disinterestedness, and that men were none the less esteemed because they strove to profit themselves and their families to the utmost in whatever position they filled. It is, then, not a little remarkable and creditable that Fénelon actually continued in a state closely approaching destitution; his means

were extremely straitened for more than five years after entering upon his honorable and responsible position at court. His private revenue was very small, nothing at all coming to him at this time from Carenac, which he describes as "hopelessly ruined." No pecuniary income, one writer says, was attached to his office; but this is hardly credible, and there are indications that there was a salary, although, strangely enough, not an adequate one. He kept a very small establishment, and it was with great difficulty that he found means to meet his current expenses. Letters to Madame de Laval, a daughter of his uncle, the marquis, and hence a sister to him, who was his guide and counselor in money matters, show this. He wrote to her, October, 1689, concerning the various economies to which he was subjected, and the sale of his carriage and ponies. Again, in March, 1691, he mentions having repaid one thousand francs out of a debt of twelve hundred due Madame de Laval, and other sums to other people. "I have made retrenchments," he says, "which are very unusual in my position; but justice comes before all other considerations. I still owe a considerable sum to my bookseller, and I must buy some plate to repay you for the things you have loaned me which are worn out." He speaks of getting his accounts into order that he may see his way in his small economies and calculate how to go on. Again, in January, 1694, he writes concerning a needy person whom he com-

mends to Madame de Laval, saying: "Although my necessities have never been so pressing as at present, I beg you to take what is wanted for this man. I am tolerably well, though very busy; but my purse is at the lowest ebb, through delays in the payment of my salary, and the exceeding dearness of everything this year. If I do not receive something shortly, I must dismiss nearly all my servants. But I will not have you try to help me. I would rather bear on. All the same, see that any money that can be sent [from Carenac] reaches me after the more urgent alms have been disbursed; for indeed I would rather live on dry bread than let any of the poor of my benefice want."

This cousin became Fénelon's sister actually, as well as in name, by her second marriage with his eldest brother, the Compte de Fénelon; and probably it never cost him more to refuse anything than when he refused her request that he would obtain a valuable military post for her son, a child four years old. But, while eager to do anything he deemed right to please her, he steadily refused to make the application she desired. He writes: "I can not relax the strict rule to which I feel it right in my position to adhere. I would do anything on earth for you or your son that I can, but not to save my life would I ask for anything from the king." Other letters that might be quoted speak the same language. It was not till 1694 that the king seems to have remembered or discovered how badly his

grandsons' preceptor was provided for. In that year, at last, he gave Fénelon the Abbey of St. Valery, which sufficiently filled his purse. The king informed him of this in person, and apologized for so tardy an acknowledgment of his gratitude. And the year before, 1693, he was chosen a member of the French Academy, a high distinction; his reception speech was made March 31st of that year. It was at this time, also, that he became a considerable factor in the management of the celebrated community at St. Cyr, known as the ladies of St. Louis, who were pledged to a devout and holy life. Madame de Maintenon had originated the idea of this foundation, with the special object of educating and training five hundred girls, daughters of the poorer nobility. It occupied a large share of her thoughts. Fénelon was associated with Bourdaloue, the Abbé Godet des Marais, subsequently Bishop of Chartres, and other eminent ecclesiastics in its government.

It was on February 4, 1695, that the king announced to Abbé de Fénelon that he had nominated him Archbishop of Cambrai, one of the richest and most important sees in the kingdom. He was taken entirely by surprise, but at once replied, after expressing his thanks, that he could scarcely rejoice in an appointment that would remove him from the preceptorship to the princes. Whereupon Louis graciously answered that the abbé was much too useful to be spared, and that his intention was

that he should retain both offices. Fénelon represented that the laws of the Church and his own conscience made this impossible, as both required residence in the diocese. But the king bore witness to his appreciation of Fénelon's services by overruling this difficulty, and replying, "No, no; the canons only require nine months' residence; you will spend three months with my grandsons, and during the rest of the year you must superintend their education from Cambrai just as you would at Versailles." This point settled, Fénelon went on to say that if he was indeed to accept the archbishopric he must resign the Abbey of St. Valery, an act of disinterestedness which Louis altogether refused to allow. But Fénelon quietly persisted, pointing out to the king that the revenues of Cambrai were such as to make it an infringement of canonical law to hold any other preferment with it. Such conscientious indifference to his own interest excited a great deal of astonishment and gossip at court. The Bishop of Rheims remarked that it was all very well for M. de Fénelon, thinking as he did, to act thus, but that thinking as *he* did, it was better for him to keep his revenues. The age was thoroughly accustomed to this plurality of benefices. In the previous century John of Lorraine was at one and the same time Archbishop of Lyons, Rheims, and Narbonne, Bishop of Metz, Toul, Verdun, Theroneune, Lucon, Alby, and Valence, and Abbot of Gortz, Fecamp, Clugny, and

Marmontier. He was also made a cardinal a year or two before attaining his majority. This was doubtless an extreme case, but there were plenty somewhat similar. So that Fénelon's self-denying course meant a good deal more than it would at the present day.

He was consecrated archbishop June 10, 1695, in the chapel of St. Cyr, in the presence of a distinguished throng, among whom were Madame de Maintenon and his three royal pupils. Bossuet was chief consecrator, the Bishop of Chalons being first assistant, and the Bishop of Amiens second. Fénelon's friends were delighted at this great advancement for him; yet it was felt by many of them that he should have had the Archbishopric of Paris, for already the popular voice had widely and loudly nominated him. Some thought that he was sent to Cambrai by the king for the express purpose of forestalling this clamor, and avoiding any necessity for putting him in the more conspicuous and influential place; for it was known that the post at Paris would soon be vacant, and, if, at its vacancy, Fénelon had been still unplaced, the pressure for his appointment there would have been very strong. As it was, M. de Harlai died August 6, 1695, less than two months after Fénelon's consecration. M. de Noailles, Bishop of Chalons, through the influence of Madame de Maintenon, was given the position.

We have reached now what was, in a worldly

point of view, the very summit of Fénelon s prosperity and glory. It might seem that, humanly speaking, he had very little, if anything, left to wish for, although, of course, the cardinalate might fairly have been expected in a few years. But the clouds were already beginning to gather which were soon to break over his head in a storm never to clear away, so far as court favor and the good things of this world were concerned. So a new chapter must be devoted to these new experiences which had so very much to do both with his temporal and spiritual affairs.

CHAPTER IV.

MYSTICISM AND QUIETISM.[1]

In order that we may properly apprehend the next period in Fénelon's life it is absolutely essential for us to take a survey of the general subject of Mysticism, for with that he became now very intimately concerned. And, happily, it is a subject of perennial importance, having no less close connection with the present day than with the centuries past. Indeed the present age has in some respects very special need of just this element. It is a commercial, materialistic, money-grabbing age, devoted to the outward and the practical; it is a time when the triumphs of machinery and invention and industrial progress are sounded as never before—an extremely busy, bustling time of immense external activity, when man hastens to get rich and rushes

[1] The principal sources of information on this important subject of Mysticism, from which we have drawn and to which we would refer such readers as wish to investigate the question further, are the following: "Christian Mysticism," by William Ralph Inge, being the Bampton Lectures for 1899; Vaughan's "Hours With the Mystics;" articles in the Encyclopedia Britannica; Schaff-Herzog Cyclopedia; McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia; articles in the *Methodist Quarterly Review* for January, 1860, January, 1869, and July, 1878; various Church Histories, and Histories of Doctrine, together with the Lives and Writings of the main Mystics mentioned in the present chapter and the chapter which follows.

through life at railroad speed, scarcely finding leisure so much as to eat, much less for the quiet contemplation of the things of the spirit. And it is the contemplative, interior, spirit-filled life with which Mysticism has pre-eminently to do.

The term, it is true, has come to be widely regarded with suspicion, and used, more or less vaguely, as a word of reproach. With many, perhaps with most, it carries an unpleasant, offensive suggestion. Its associations in their minds are with that which is misty or recondite, visionary and unintelligible; also with that which is fanatical, extravagant, unreasonable, and somewhat dangerous. That there is some ground for this impression can not be denied, because under the general name of Mysticism much has been included, in the long sweep of the centuries, which can not be admired or defended; much which does not commend itself to that level-headed common sense according to whose dictates we like to think that our religion can be and should be squared. But we are persuaded that this extreme objectionable development, or manifestation, of the Mystic spirit has been much less frequent than is commonly supposed, and has no sufficient claim to be identified with it in the public mind anywhere near as largely as it usually is. There is a true Mysticism, and a false Mysticism. There are Mystics every way worthy of highest honor, and there are those not at all points deserving imitation. It surely is a mistake to lay the chief

stress on the latter, as is so frequently done, and thus to stamp a stigma upon all. Christian Mysticism is something of which no one can afford to be ignorant. The Church which neglects it or despises it, whether through misapprehension or some less honorable cause, is certain to be a large loser.

What is Mysticism? As has been pointed out by several, it is something which from its very nature is hardly susceptible of exact definition, does not readily lend itself to the most precise forms of language. It is a phase of thought or feeling which continually appears in connection with the endeavor of the human mind to grasp the Divine essence, and to enjoy the blessedness of actual communion with the Highest. It springs inevitably from intense desire for intimate fellowship with God, from the hottest possible pursuit of the highest ideals. It is a sort of name for the realization of God as transfused throughout the universe, as being immanent in material things and in mankind alike. The Century Dictionary defines Mysticism as "any mode of thought or phase of intellectual or religious life in which reliance is placed upon a spiritual illumination believed to transcend the ordinary powers of understanding." The Standard Dictionary says that Mysticism is "the doctrine and belief that man may attain to an immediate direct consciousness or knowledge of God as the real and absolute principle of all truth. The term is applied to a system of thought and life of which the chief feature is an

extreme development of meditative and intuitive methods as distinguished from the definitive and scholastic." Similarly Dr. J. P. Lange, in the Schaff-Herzog Cyclopedia, says: "Mysticism has been defined as belief in an immediate and continuous communication between God and the soul which may be established by certain peculiar religious exercises. . . . There is a mystic element in all true religion." Cousin says: "Mysticism is the belief that God may be known face to face without anything intermediate. It is a yielding to the sentiment awakened by the Infinite, and a summing up of all knowledge and all duty in the contemplation and love of Him." Nitzsch, in his "System of Christian Doctrine," declares "that the religious man, the man of faith, is, as such, a Mystic; for he in whose consciousness God does not appear, certainly does not feel God, nor can he know or honor Him; but he who only thinks Him, without loving Him and becoming pure in heart, can not know Him vitally; much less can he behold Him spiritually who desires to see Him with the outward sense. The inner life of religion is ever Mysticism."

This is why in all ages of the Church, when the outward has come to usurp and absorb attention, when formalism and ceremonialism have dominated the mind, when scholasticism has gained ascendency, and especially when a corrupt looseness of morals has set in to degrade the very ideals of

humanity, there have been those who have arisen to make a stand for a purer, more fervent, more spiritual type of piety. They have met, of course, with bitter opposition; they have troubled those who did not wish to be disturbed in their carnal indulgences or worldly conformities, and they have had various uncomplimentary epithets thrown at them; such as, Pietists, Quietists, Mystics, Puritans, Quakers, and Methodists. They have been misrepresented in manifold ways. They have been persecuted even unto the death. But they have been the salt of the earth, and the succession has been kept up under one name or another from the earliest days to the present. They have not always been endowed with philosophic minds or skilled in the learning of the schools. They have been keenly conscious of the difficulty, the impossibility, of completely expressing, in imperfect human words, the deep things of God revealed to them on the mounts of vision with which they have been favored. They have struggled hard with the inadequacy of the only language at their command, and have been driven to a liberal use of figures of speech, some of them questionable in point of propriety. They have had a cramped vocabulary, have made mistakes, have not found themselves able to translate into intelligible terms all that was in their minds. To mint the secrets of the interior life into the current coin of language suited to the comprehension of common souls requires a skill given to but few. And more es-

pecially have their expressions been found unintelligible, or worse, by adversaries not qualified by any experience to comprehend what it was all about. For, as St. Paul says (1 Cor. ii): "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, and he can not know them, because they are spiritually judged. We speak wisdom among the perfect, God's wisdom in a mystery, even a wisdom which hath been hidden, which none of the rulers of this world knoweth. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth, interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men." The adversaries were also eager in many cases to remove out of the way those who, by their purity of life and their opposition to priestly claims and gains, were esteemed dangerous to the peace of the Church. We are confident that in the main this is a fair interpretation of the course which events have taken. Not but what some of the Mystics have really laid themselves open to the complaints of their enemies. They have been unguarded in their language, have been so carried away with ecstasy, as some new precious truth has burst upon them, that they have stated it too strongly; have not supplied the limitations and modifications and exceptions which would have been well, which were necessary for a complete rounding out of the statement; have taken for granted that the other side had been sufficiently em-

phasized before, and that their special mission to emphasize the neglected point would be recognized; hence they have said things which, by strict construction and taken in bald literalness, were not precisely true. All this can be granted without casting any serious reflection either on their character or their doctrines. Their books must be read with caution and discrimination. To persons not well balanced they might sometimes be a source of peril. But this admission is in no way incompatible with the assertion that they have conferred a very great benefit upon mankind, that their doctrines, on the whole, are sound, and that this generation could ill afford to overlook the good to be obtained by careful studies in this direction.

The first Mystics were really St. John and St. Paul; and their words have full justification in what they derived from their Divine Master. Who more positively than the great Apostle to the Gentiles, "according to the wisdom given unto him," preached a gospel that was foolishness to some, but which he continually called the wisdom and the mystery of God; a gospel which proclaims the Divine indwelling, we in Him and He in us, our bodies the temples of the Holy Ghost, believers being "in Christ" and "members one of another?" He was a man caught up into Paradise, and hearing unspeakable words which it was not lawful or possible for a man to utter. "I die daily," he said, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live,

but Christ liveth in me;" "To me to live is Christ;" "I have learned the secret, I can do all things in Him;" "I fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ;" "Ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God;" "In Him we live, and move, and have our being;" "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit,"—and many other such like things there be, left on record from his pen to show clearly that he was a true Mystic. Still more, perhaps, do the Mystics look to St. John for complete authorization of their position. His Gospel is the spiritual Gospel, the charter of Christian Mysticism. It is he who tells us, "God is love," "God is light," "God is Spirit." The Divine union which he sets before us is of the closest kind. "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ;" "Ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things;" "The anointing which ye received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any teach you;" "Hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us;" "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness;" "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him," etc. It is impossible to quote a tithe of the words in John's Epistles and Gospel which embody the fundamental ideas of Mysticism. Especially do we find in the marvelous words of Jesus reported by John alone, as by the one peculiarly fitted to formulate them, in the thir-

teenth to the seventeenth chapters of his Gospel, the seeds and roots of all which have been drawn forth by subsequent writers on these profound themes.

Plato has been called "the Father of European Mysticism." Dr. Inge says: "Both the great types of Mystics may appeal to him,—those who try to rise through the visible to the invisible, through nature to God; and those who look upon this earth as a place of banishment, upon material things as a veil which hides God's face from us, and who bid us seek yonder in the realm of ideas the heart's true home. Plato teaches that the highest good is the greatest likeness to God; that the greatest happiness is the vision of God; that we should seek holiness, not for the sake of reward, but because it is the health of the soul, while vice is its disease; that goodness is unity and harmony, while evil disintegrates; that it is our duty to rise above the visible and transitory to the invisible and permanent."

The Church has never lacked during its history for those who have followed this line of thought and cultivated this kind of experience. Clement of Alexandria has been called "the Founder of Christian Mysticism," a Neoplatonist among the Fathers; followed by Dionysius the Areopagite, and a lengthy line of successors, large among whom looms the noble Bernard of Clairvaux, the glory of the twelfth century. Without tracing out the story in detail it will be enough for our purpose to refer briefly to those who, in the few centuries before Fénelon,

stood forth most prominently as leaders in this realm of truth, and so prepared the way for him.

In the fourteenth century we find a most remarkable band of devout believers who called themselves "Friends of God," to signify that they had reached that stage of Christian life when Christ, according to His promise, would call them "no longer servants but friends." They were composed of persons from all classes of society, and from all the religious orders. Most prominent among these were Master Eckhart—styled "Doctor Ecstaticus" —vicar-general of the Dominican order, a man of uncommon purity of life and great excellence of character, one of the profound thinkers of the Middle Ages; Henry Suso, who has been called "the Minnesinger of Divine Love," and who was wont to say, "A man of true self-abandonment must be *un*built from the creature, *in*built with Christ, and *over*built into the Godhead" (he was prior of the Dominican convent at Ulm, where he died in 1365); Nicholas of Basle; and John Tauler. Nicholas was a layman who wielded a powerful pen and was also a great preacher; thoroughly devoted to religion from his earliest days. He traveled much through Germany, propagating his opinions in a quiet, unostentatious manner, and gradually there grew up around him a society of Christians composed of men and women likeminded with himself, who loved to honor him as their spiritual father. It seems to have been largely his personal influence which held

them together, for they fell to pieces after he was burned at the stake for heresy, near Poitiers, about 1382.

John Tauler—"Doctor Illuminatus"—born at Strasburg, 1290, and dying there in 1361, was still more distinguished, although indebted to Nicholas for being led out into the light. This took place when he was over fifty years of age. Nicholas, coming to Strasburg to hear the famous preacher, speedily detected his deficiency in spiritual experience, and the lack of true power attending the Word on this account. With rare humility, Tauler, a learned theologian, received this rebuke from the uneducated layman, and so profited by it that he was able, though not without long struggle, to enter into complete freedom. Then he preached in a very different manner, and the first time he opened his mouth in public fourteen persons fell as if dead under the Word, and nearly thirty others were so deeply moved that they remained sitting in the churchyard long after the congregation was dismissed, unwilling to move away. For eighteen years after this second conversion he made great progress in the divine life, rising to a place of highest esteem with his brethren, and being rightly reckoned among the chief of God's children on earth.

Properly to be counted among these Friends of God can be set down the unknown author of "Deutsche Theologie," or "Theologia Germanica," which contained so much truth that it had the dis-

tinguished honor of being put upon the Romish Index of prohibited works. Luther ascribed it to Tauler. It is in his style, and contains his sentiments; but it is now considered more probable that it originated a little later than his time, and was written by some other member of the band. It was their usual practice to conceal their names as much as possible when they wrote, lest a desire for fame should mingle in their endeavors to be useful. Luther placed it next to the Bible and St. Augustine as a source of knowledge concerning God and Christ and man. Baron Bunsen ranks it still higher. And many others have expressed their supreme indebtedness to it for help in respect to the perfect life. It has continued up to the present day to be the favorite handbook of devotion in Germany.

Concerning the views and doctrines of these Friends of God, although some of their expressions and opinions may be objected to, considering the corrupt age in which they lived they must be pronounced worthy of high praise. They insisted, first of all, on the uttermost self-renunciation, yet they avoided the system of penances and austerities common in the monasteries. Neither idle contemplation nor passive asceticism found favor with them; they were evangelical and practical, full of good works and the imitation of Christ both in patient suffering and active usefulness. They were animated by an exalted reformatory spirit which threw them out of touch with the ecclesiastics around

them. Though they did not in all cases fall under the ban of the Church, they may still be regarded as forerunners of the Reformation. Their Mysticism was a powerful protest against the terrible corruptions of the Romish Church and the cold, barren speculations of scholasticism. They craved and secured direct communion with God, unrestricted by human interposition; an immediate vision of the Almighty, undimmed by any separating veil and unchanged by any distorting medium. The highest form of the Divine life in a man seemed to them to be perfect resignation to the will of God, and they counted prayer to be the best means of bringing about this state of resignation. "To pray for a change in one's circumstances," they said, "is to pray that what God sends may be made subject to us, not that we should submit ourselves to it; and so tends to produce self-assertion, not self-renunciation." Nicholas taught that "when self-renunciation is complete, the soul of man, having become entirely resigned to the Divine will, becomes so entirely assimilated to the Divine nature that it has continually a near fellowship with God; he is always in familiar intercourse with the Spirit of God, who communicates to him all Divine knowledge." "All things to the beloved are of God; all, therefore, are indifferent." That religion which sprang from fear of punishment or hope of reward they counted of little worth, and considered love to be by far the highest state, the only one truly

worthy of the Christian.[2] Their union with Deity was not that of pantheism but of passionate love, and great prominence was given to the will as the mainspring on which all developments of the higher life depend.

The following quotations from "Theologia Germanica" will convey in a few words what may be called the root ideas of the book and of the men whose spirit it so well embodies:

"A true lover of God loveth Him alike in having and in not having, in sweetness and in bitterness, in good or evil report; for he seeketh only the honor of God, and not his own, either in spiritual or natural things. Therefore he standeth alike unshaken in all things."

"All disobedience is contrary to God, and nothing else. In truth, no thing is contrary to God; no creature, nor creature's work, nor anything that we can name or think of, is contrary to God or displeasing to Him, but only disobedience and the dis-

[2] Even Spinoza said, "He that would love God aright must not seek to be loved in return;" and Goethe confessed himself haunted by this wonderful saying. It is fully in accord with the fact that the most chivalrous and generous friendship is never concerned about payment in kind, about what it shall get in return; it only asks the privilege of loving and of pouring itself out unstintedly for its beloved. Disinterestedness should not probably be pressed as a requirement upon minds not capable of such heights, but it has a grandeur that appeals sometimes to nearly all. This was especially the case in an age when Jesuit cheapjacks were accustomed to haggle with God for the price of the soul, and discuss whether it was necessary to love Him once in a week or once in a year, or whether salvation might not be purchased still more cheaply at the price of one act of love in a lifetime.

obedient man. In short, all that is, is well-pleasing and good in God's eyes, saving only the disobedient man."

"The man who is truly godlike complaineth of nothing but of sin only. And sin is simply to desire or will anything otherwise than the one perfect good and the one eternal will, or to wish to have a will of one's own."

"Sin is to will, desire, or love otherwise than God doth. Things do not thus will, desire, or love: therefore things are not evil; all things are good."

"He who is truly a virtuous man would not cease to be so to gain the whole world; yea, he would rather die a miserable death. To him virtue is its own reward, and he is content therewith, and would take no treasure or riches in exchange for it."

"Union with God is brought to pass in three ways; to wit, by pureness and singleness of heart, by love, and by the contemplation of God."

A still greater name among the Mystic writers, coming a bit later than those already mentioned, is that of Thomas à Kempis, born near Cologne, in this same West Germany where the Friends of God flourished, in 1386, and dying about 1470. His "Imitation of Christ" stands easily at the head of its class, first in popularity and usefulness among manuals for devotion. "The epic poem of the inner life," it has lent the fragrance of its sanctity to every language of the civilized world, and has been a prime favorite for nearly five hundred years with

all those who have made largest advancement in holy things. Only a few extracts need be given to show how closely it is in line with what has already been said, and what remains to be said, concerning the topic of our chapter:

"When a man is so far advanced in the Christian life as not to seek consolation from any created thing, then does he first begin perfectly to enjoy God; his heart is wholly fixed and established in God who is his All in All."

"There is no other occasion of perplexity and disquiet but an unsubdued will and unmortified affections."

"Self-denial is the test of spiritual perfection, and he that truly denies himself is arrived at a state of great freedom and safety. It is no small advantage to suppress desire, even in inconsiderable gratifications. Restless and inordinate desires are the ground of every temptation."

"Abandon all, and thou shalt possess all; relinquish desire, and thou shalt find rest."

"No evil is permitted to befall thee but what may be made productive of a much greater good. Receive all with thankfulness, as from the hand of God, and esteem it great gain."

"For all that befalleth me I will thank the Love that prompts the gift, and reverence the Hand that confers it."

"O Lord God, holy Father, be Thou blessed now

and forever! For whatever Thou willest is done, and all that Thou willest is good."

"The righteous should never be moved by whatever befalls him, knowing that it comes from the hands of God, and is to promote the important business of our redemption. Without God, nothing is done upon the face of the earth."

"Perfection consists in offering up thyself, with thy whole heart, to the will of God; never seeking thine own will either in small or great respects; but with an equal mind weighing all events in the balance of the sanctuary, and receiving both prosperity and adversity with equal thanksgiving."

"All is vanity but the love of God and a life devoted to His will."

Passing over St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross[3]—particulars about whom may be found in Vaughan—and denying ourselves, through limitations of space, all quotations from Rodriguez and Scupoli,[4] who flourished in the sixteenth century, and wrote divinely about Divine things, leaving the world heroic examples of holiness,—we come to St. Francis of Sales and Molinos, both of whom had

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[3] Inge says: "Fiery energy and unresting industry characterized St. John of the Cross. No one ever climbed the rugged peaks of Mt. Carmel with more heroic courage and patience. His life shows what tremendous moral force is generated by complete self-surrender to God. His reward was fellowship with Christ in suffering."

[4] See "Honey from Many Hives," gathered by Rev. James Mudge, New York, Eaton and Mains, 1899. Large quotations also from Francis of Sales are given in this volume, and from many other Mystical writers.

close connection with Fénelon, although in different ways. Francis—born in 1567 and departing to glory in 1622, who has been called "the noblest, tenderest and most devoted Mystic of the Catholic Church after the Reformation"—more than any other, was Fénelon's teacher in matters pertaining to the inner life, even as Scupoli had been the teacher of Francis. Fénelon never wearies of recommending to the correspondents whom he is instructing in spiritual things the perusal of the works of this delightful and inspiring writer. He says to one: "You can read nothing better than St. Francis of Sales. Everything he writes is full of comfort and love; although his whole tone is that of self-mortification, it is all deep experience, simple precautions, high feeling, and the light of grace. You will have made a great step when you are familiar with such mental food." Upon another he urges "a half hour spent in meditative reading of the Gospels in the morning, and an evening portion of St. Francis de Sales." To the Elector of Cologne, when about to receive episcopal consecration, he says, "Read the Life and Works of St. Francis de Sales." We do not wonder at these counsels. The two men, the two Francises, were entirely congenial, marvelously alike in heart and head, with similar vivacity, urbanity, and grace of manner, polish of style, profundity of insight into the soul, and practical knowledge of the world. Both had high rank in State and Church, strong in-

tellects, intense devotion to God, and ability to express truth in a simple, lucid, attractive way. They were alike in that the profound piety they taught was not, as in the previous age, reserved for the cloister, but was quite compatible with mingling in the world, requiring no great change of habits, but an entire change of motive. Even the life at court might be continued and graced with cheerful obedience to the whole will of God; all the actions of the day could be sanctified by a perpetual prayer offered up in their midst and by a sincere intention to please God; the humble every-day virtues were extolled, and no austerities recommended. Thus religion was made commensurate with the whole of life, and the saint could join in all that others did, except sin. No difference can be found in their doctrines, or even their forms of expression, and it seems like an irony of fate that the Bishop of Geneva should be canonized in 1665 by the same Church which condemned, in 1699, the Archbishop of Cambrai. The fictitious and factitious reasons that led to the latter will be detailed a little later.

Part of the reason is connected with the history and fate of Miguel de Molinos, commonly esteemed to be the founder of the Quietists. He was a Spanish theologian, born of noble parentage near Saragossa, December 21, 1627. He acquired a great reputation at Rome and elsewhere for purity of life and vigor of intellect, but steadily refused all ecclesiastical preferment. In 1675 he published his

"Spiritual Guide," which in a few years passed through twenty editions in different languages, and was warmly hailed by people of marked piety in many lands. But it was soon bitterly attacked, especially by the Jesuits, who quickly perceived that Molinos' system tacitly accused the Romish Church of a departure from the true religion, and that his whole doctrine would militate against the power of the priesthood and the importance of ceremonialism. Although he had a vast number of friends, some of them eminent for learning and piety, and even high in worldly rank, and though the pontiff himself, Innocent XI, was partial to him, he was, in 1685, cited before the Inquisition and subjected to close examination as well as rigid imprisonment. It is said that as many as twenty thousand letters were found in his house, which, if true, shows the degree to which the movement he headed had spread, and the hunger of great multitudes for spiritual food. His trial lasted two years, and in 1687 sixty-eight propositions, purporting to be extracted from his book, were condemned, and he was declared to have taught false and dangerous dogmas contrary to the doctrine of the Church. He was compelled to pass the remainder of his life in the dungeons of the Inquisition, where he died, after many years of close confinement, in which he exhibited the greatest humility and peace of mind.

The principles of his book have been much misunderstood and misrepresented. The following

statement is believed to be substantially correct. He taught that Christian perfection consists in the peace of the soul, springing from a complete self-surrender into the hands of God, in the renouncement of all external, temporal things, and in the pure love of God free from all considerations of interest or hope of reward. A soul which desires the supreme good must renounce all sensual and material things, silence every impulse, and concentrate itself on God. In a state of perfect contemplation the soul desires absolutely nothing, not even its own salvation; it fears nothing, not even hell; the one only feeling of which it is conscious is utter abandonment to God's good will and pleasure; it is indifferent to all else; and nothing which does not reach the will, where alone virtue resides, can really pollute the soul. The system was termed Quietism, because it laid so much stress upon inward quiet, passive contemplation, and silent prayer; also upon freedom from hope and fear, the great agitators of the human mind.

It is a very vulgar error to suppose that the Mystics taught abstention from good works, or outward inactivity; for none were busier in blessing their fellow-men, as the twenty thousand letters above mentioned might indicate, as well as the ceaseless endeavors in this direction put forth by Madame Guyon, Fénelon, and the rest. Mystics are not impracticable dreamers; they have been in a very marked degree energetic and influential. Their

passivity simply meant a calm yet glad acceptance of all God's dispensations. They were also abundantly active in the highest sense, since the old faculties were transformed and uplifted and no longer shackled by the cramping chains of sin, but enabled to do far more for the good of mankind and the glory of God in their happy, healthy working than they ever had done before. They laid great stress upon faith, rather than rites or austerities, as a means of justification and sanctification, a peculiarity which seems at the bottom of the remark of the Romish ecclesiastic who wrote, under date of July 10, 1685, "I am informed that a Jesuit named Molinos has been put into the Inquisition at Rome, accused of wishing to become chief of a new sect called Quietists, whose principles are somewhat similar to those of the Puritans in England." There is sufficient similarity between the Quietism of the seventeenth century and the Pietism and Methodism of Germany and England in the eighteenth century to give us a friendly feeling toward it. That the former was not so well guarded as the latter; was less directed to practical ends; was not in control of such cool, sensible minds; ran very easily into abuses; had stronger pantheistic leanings; was more open to the objection that it taught a strained, impossible perfection utterly out of reach of all but the few, and attainable by those few perhaps only under very favorable conditions,—may be freely granted. But it does not, and need not, prevent our

sympathies going out strongly toward those who, in that earlier day and amid much difficulty, struck out the high path on lines not essentially at variance with those who, in easier times of greater enlightenment, came after them. The Mystics, with all their extravagances, possessed more of the truth of God than could be found elsewhere within the wide domains of the Roman Church. The Reformers recognized this, and sympathized far more deeply with them than with the schoolmen.

It should be said, also, that the Quietists vehemently repudiated the constructions put upon their writings by their enemies, and the evil inferences which were drawn from them. They protested against what others professed to find there as being no part of their real belief. It seems to us that they have a perfect right to be heard in explanation of their tenets, and much allowance must be made for those endeavoring to find expressions that would convey such profound and lofty thoughts. Professor George P. Fisher, in his "History of the Christian Church," says, "The real ground of hostility to Quietism was its tendency to lead to the dispensing with auricular confession and penances and outward rites altogether."

It will be sufficiently evident from what has been now written that there is Mysticism *and* Mysticism; and that that which has the best right to the name lies very close to the most essential truth of the best religion, inseparable from it so far as it is to answer the deepest yearnings of the human heart. If re-

ligion is not to be made wholly objective, reduced to a round of external performances, accounted synonymous with philanthropy and morality; if its subjective side is to have proper recognition as the controlling one; if being is to take rank above doing, as we firmly believe it should,—then we are all Mystics in the true sense of the word. Since we have to do with "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," and which must be known by some higher faculty than the understanding; since the new birth is fitly compared by the Master to the mysterious coming and going of the winds of heaven, and can not be completely comprehended by the human reason; since the method of God with the soul of man passes all metes and bounds of man's finite mind, and the operations of the Holy Spirit can not be wholly fathomed by cold intellect,—Mysticism has extremely close relations with all parts of supernaturalism. It is grounded in a profounder philosophy than those can offer who assume to scout and scorn it. We as Methodists, especially, believe firmly in feeling, and in a first-hand knowledge of God as the privilege of each genuine believer. We hold fast to experience as having rights which logic and dogma must respect; we have exalted life above theory, and the vision divine above dead orthodoxy; we maintain that there is a God-consciousness, as well as a self-consciousness and a world-consciousness; and that spiritual facts can be, and should be, verified in personal experience. We count the words of Pascal divinely true: "The

things of this world must be known in order to be loved; but the things of God must be loved in order to be known."

"Mysticism," says Professor J. E. Latimer, "has ever been a reaction from formalism and dogmatism in religion. When Christian men have been relying upon the letter, the Mystic has always exalted the spirit. When the Church has been content with mere dogmatic statement and intellectual orthodoxy, a Mystic revival has come to rehabilitate its spiritual life, and sends new streams of power along its arid channel." Do we not greatly need this revival now? We do not believe there is any special danger to-day from one-sided subjectivity and morbid introspection. The peril is altogether the other way. Our great want is a profounder apprehension of the basal truths of the spiritual life, and their practical translation into individual experience. The knowledge of God is widespread, but it is superficial. Piety is very bustling, but it is not deep. The utterances of the Savior and His apostles are taken at a large discount, and the mass of believers are easily content with a low condition of spirituality. Hence the Church is feeble, and fails to impress itself strongly upon the world. It would be immensely benefited by a large infusion of the spirit of the true Mystic, who wages the most deadly war with all carnality; who has a terrible moral intensity; who renounces absolutely all that dims the radiance or shadows the image of the Perfect One in the mirror of the soul; who is

determined, so far as in him lies, to bridge the gulf that separates him from his Maker and make the closest possible approach to God. Of Rabbi Gamaliel, a genuine Mystic, it is reported that he prayed, "O Lord, grant that I may do Thy will as if it were my will, and that Thou mayest do my will as if it were Thy will." Charles Wesley, another Mystic, is very bold and says,

> "Let all I am in Thee be lost,
> Let all I am be God."

Why should it be thought a thing incredible with any that man may become a partaker of the Divine nature? If to a small extent, why not, when all the conditions are favorable, to a very large extent? Why should not the Church in general, and the Methodist Church in particular, get a new grip on this much neglected but every way fruitful truth of the Divine indwelling and the Divine immanence, God in all and all in God, the universe but the will of God expressed in forms of time and space, humanity reaching its highest point of development when it most completely entemples Deity, nature a symbol of God, God revealed in His works? Just so far as this shall be accomplished will the Church swing out into a wealthy place, and march forward to large conquest. Complete surrender will be the prelude to complete possession, and complete possession will straightway be turned into complete victory over every foe.

CHAPTER V.

THE GREAT CONFLICT.

We come now to the central period of Fénelon's career, that wherein he put forth his greatest mental exertion, fighting, as it were, for his very life, and for that truth which he held much dearer than life. It is a period which every sketch of him, however brief, touches upon, and which we must set forth at some length. The last chapter, on Mysticism and Quietism, will have prepared us to consider somewhat sympathetically the career of Madame Guyon, who was so closely linked with Fénelon during these few years, and who was the chief exponent of the Quietist or Mystic beliefs at this time in France. She was born, as Jeanne Marie Bouvier de la Mothe, April 13, 1648, at Montargis, about fifty miles south of Paris, and wedded before she was sixteen, by the arrangement of her parents, to a man of thirty-eight, M. Jacques Guyon, who was very wealthy. She had an unhappy married life, closed by the death of her husband when she was twenty-eight. She had five children, two of whom died in infancy. Suffering was her portion, and religion her consolation, through all her days. When not yet thirteen she read with eager-

ness the Life of Madame Chantal, Kempis' "Imitation of Christ," and the works of Francis of Sales, making a vow at this time to aim at the highest perfection and to do the will of God in everything. Later, when seventeen, this determination was renewed with fuller purpose and intelligence; yet it was not till she was twenty, so limited were her privileges of instruction, that her heart became thoroughly changed, the pleasures of the world put definitely aside, and her life devoted entirely to God. Her education, in a convent, was quite defective, but her natural abilities were very great. She had remarkable powers of conversation, her intellect was keen, her ascendency over other minds, even some of the greatest, in after years was very striking. She learned Latin subsequently, that she might carry on her studies more profoundly. She prepared extensive commentaries on the Scriptures, and her writings, in their collective form, were issued in forty volumes. Afflictions many were used by the Lord to chasten her spirit and deepen her experience. She lost her mother and father, lost a dearly beloved son and darling daughter, lost her beauty by the scourge of smallpox at the age of twenty-two, lost her dearest friend and religious confidante, Genevieve Granger, prioress of the Benedictines, in 1673, and then her husband in 1676.

It was July 22, 1672, that she gave herself to the Lord afresh, with larger comprehension and

consecration, without reservation of purpose or time, in the most solemn manner, signing and sealing the following covenant: "I henceforth take Jesus Christ to be mine. I promise to receive Him as a husband to me, and I give myself to Him, unworthy though I am, to be His spouse. I ask of Him, in this marriage of spirit with spirit, that I may be of the same mind with Him—meek, pure, nothing in myself, and united in God's will; and, pledged as I am to be His, I accept as a part of my marriage portion, the temptations and sorrows, the crosses and the contempts, which fell to Him." This sacred covenant of the spiritual marriage with her Redeemer, she carefully renewed and reviewed on its anniversary. Especially noticeable was the renewal in 1681, for it took place in Annecy, at the tomb of St. Francis of Sales, who, more than any other human being, was her master in spiritual things, as he has been to hundreds of thousands more. When left a widow with large property interests, she first settled up the affairs of the extensive estate with much skill, without assistance from any one, did much in charity for those around her, looked after her children, and then gradually felt her way to what was to be her life-work in the world. Her spiritual experience all the while was advancing; she was sinking more thoroughly out of self into God. July 22, 1680, was a specially memorable epoch with her, when she began to count the life of nature as fully slain within, when her

soul seemed to be delivered from all its chains, and set wholly at liberty, in a way not known before. She says, "I had a deep peace; a peace which seemed to pervade the whole soul; a peace which resulted from the fact that all my desires were fulfilled in God. I desired nothing; feared nothing; willed nothing. I feared nothing; that is to say, I feared nothing considered in its ultimate results and relations, because my strong faith placed God at the head of all perplexities and all events. I desired nothing but what I now have, because I had a full belief that in my present state of mind the results of each moment, considered in relation to myself, constituted the fulfillment of the Divine purposes. I willed nothing; meaning in this statement that I had no will of my own. As a sanctified heart is always in harmony with the Divine providences, I had no will but the Divine will, of which such providences are the true and appropriate expression."

This extract expresses as well, perhaps, as anything can, the mainsprings of her personal feeling and the chief substance of her teaching. She always beheld the hand of God in all things, recognized practically that God orders and provides every allotment in life, every situation, however distressing to the flesh or perplexing to the perceptions. She looked at everything on the side of God, and found Him always manifested in His providences. She was not merely consecrated *to* God's will, she rested *in* His will, united to it by a most simple

faith, finding her joy in Jesus. All that had God in it—and that included everything except sin—was delightful to her. She found the order of Divine providence a very precious and sufficient rule of conduct; for she accounted that every successive second, and every event, however minute, had something about it which made known His will. Hence, trusting fully, and finding God always everywhere, nothing moved her. And she came to feel it to be her special mission, since God had revealed these things to her, as He had not to others, to proclaim this particular kind of holiness; a holiness which was a present privilege and possession, based upon and secured by faith. This interior life, or "inward path," as she sometimes called it, or state of perfect obedience to the will of God, had still another name by which it came to be widely known—the name of *disinterested* (or pure, perfect, unselfish) *love*. By this was meant a love which served God for Himself alone, uninfluenced by fear of punishment or hope of reward.

She was led to go to the south of France, to Gex, Thonon, Grenoble, Nice, Marseilles; and as she taught these things to those who came within her reach—and great numbers resorted to her—she began straightway to endure the persecutions which are promised by St. Paul to those who follow the godly life. She preached reality rather than forms. The two great principles which she clearly, strongly proclaimed were self-renunciation and per-

fect union with the Divine will; nothing in ourselves, but all in God. She urged also the reading and study of the Bible, which she constantly practiced herself. These things, of course, brought down upon her the severest opposition from the ruling authorities in the Church. Some were jealous of her because she was a woman; some were rebuked in their sins; some felt that she was preaching the heresies of Protestantism; some were offended at the unaccustomed terms she employed. The doctrine of full salvation by faith and complete conformity to Christ crucified, never popular in any age or land, was particularly obnoxious then and there. When persecuted in one city she fled to another, as the Savior directed, being in no haste to justify herself, leaving her vindication, for the most part, with God. She was able to do a great deal for the Master in spite of continual opposition, being occupied sometimes from six in the morning till eight at night with those who came to her for spiritual help, writing incessantly also, and scattering her productions. She established a hospital in Grenoble, and was at all times assiduous in rescuing the fallen and doing good to the needy. In one of her books written at this time, called "The Method of Prayer," she rightly says: "No man can know whether he is wholly consecrated to the Lord except by tribulation. That is the test. To rejoice in God's will when that will imparts nothing but happiness is easy, even for the natural man. But none

but the religious man can rejoice in the Divine will when it crosses his path, disappoints his expectations, and overwhelms him with sorrow. Trial, therefore, instead of being shunned, should be welcomed as a test, and the only true test of the true state." She nobly endured this test, not only at this time, but still more signally as the years went on. She arrived again in Paris, five years after her departure from that city, July 22, 1686. Here she became one of the little circle which met frequently for religious and social purposes at the Hotel de Beauvilliers, a circle which included Madame de Maintenon and Fénelon.

When Fénelon was in the province of Poitou, at work among the Huguenots in 1686, he first heard of Madame Guyon and became somewhat acquainted with her writings, which deeply interested him, as they were drawn so largely from Francis of Sales, his own chief teacher. On returning from his mission in 1687, he passed through the city of Montargis, and made there careful inquiries concerning this woman. He was impressed, says M. de Bausset, one of his biographers, "by the unanimous testimonies which he heard of her piety and goodness." On returning to Paris he met her for the first time at the house of the Duchess of Charost, a few miles beyond Versailles, and again soon after at the house of the Duchess of Bethune. This was in the latter part of 1688, after her release from her first imprisonment. For her enemies, among whom was her half-brother, the Abbé la Mothe, had

followed her to Paris, accused her to Monsieur de Harlai, the notoriously wicked archbishop, and he easily obtained from the king, to whom it was represented that her doctrines were substantially the same as those of the heretic Molinos, a *lettre de cachet,* or sealed order, putting her in confinement, January 29, 1688. She refused to purchase her liberty by the sacrifice of her little daughter, only twelve years of age, whom the king wished to force into a very unseemly marriage with a person who wished to get possession of her large property. She refused also to take other means for her release which did not commend themselves to her as right. She answered them, "I am content to suffer whatever it pleases God to order or permit, but I would sooner die upon the scaffold than utter the falsehoods you propose." Whether written at this time or at some of her subsequent imprisonments, the following hymn of hers so well represents her constant attitude that it is eminently proper to insert it here:

"A little bird I am,
Shut from the fields of air;
And in my cage I sit and sing
To Him who placed me there;
Well pleased a prisoner to be,
Because, my God, it pleases Thee.

Nought have I else to do;
I sing the whole day long;
And He, whom most I love to please,
Doth listen to my song;
He caught and bound my wandering wing,
But still He bends to hear me sing.

Thou hast an ear to hear;
A heart to love and bless;
And, though my notes were e'er so rude,
Thou would'st not hear the less;
Because Thou knowest as they fall,
That LOVE, sweet LOVE, inspires them all.

My cage confines me round;
Abroad I can not fly;
But, though my wing is closely bound,
My heart's at liberty.
My prison walls can not control
The flight, the freedom of the soul.

O, it is good to soar,
These bolts and bars above,
To Him whose purpose I adore,
Whose providence I love;
And in Thy mighty will to find
The joy, the freedom of the mind."

Her friends were not idle, and finally, by the intercession of Madame de Miramion, Madame de Maisonfort, and the Duchesses Beauvilliers and Chevreuse, acting through Madame de Maintenon upon the king, Madame Guyon was released in October, 1688. On being set free she took up her residence at the house of Madame de Miramion, and resumed her labor for souls as opportunity presented itself. Early in 1690 her daughter was married to Count de Vaux, a man of high character, brother of the Duchess de Bethune and nephew of the Duchess de Charost; and as the child was scarcely fourteen she went to live with her a little

way out of the city. Here Fénelon visited frequently, and when she had once more returned to Paris, hiring a private house for herself there in 1692, he met her much.

What of her influence upon him? Those not in sympathy with her ideas, by whom indeed the inner things of the kingdom are pertly dubbed "nonsense," have called her "the evil genius of his life," and ascribed to her what they are pleased to term his ruin and downfall. We are very certain that he did not himself regard either it or her in that light. They had very much in common. There was the same hunger after the highest religious attainments, and their ideas as to the path were at bottom the same. Fénelon had the theological training which she lacked, and hence found difficulty with many of her expressions, which seemed to him objectionable and liable to misapprehension, as doubtless they were. But it seems altogether probable that at this time she was more advanced in the spiritual life, more perfectly taught of God, than he. Hence, in the extended correspondence which took place between them, covering a space of some two years or more, from its beginning in November, 1688, it is usually he who asks the questions and seeks for explanations. She responded with entire patience and deep religious insight, taking all possible pains, as may well be supposed, with so distinguished yet so docile a pupil. To one with so clear an intellect and so sympathetic a spirit she could express her

thought with the utmost freedom, and his enlightened, powerful mind, untrammeled by the prejudices which so often prevented—and always prevents—correct perceptions, readily saw the validity of her views. She herself says: "I was enabled in our conversations so fully to explain everything to Fénelon that he gradually entered into the views which the Lord had led me to entertain, and finally gave them his unqualified assent. The persecutions which he has since suffered are the evidence of the sincerity of his belief." If he was greatly indebted to her, as everything appears to prove—and as many other eminent men have been to godly women—for getting into a much closer conformity to the will of God, it is no wonder that he was never willing to unite with her enemies in her condemnation, although every earthly motive was on that side.

It was in 1692 that the acquaintance of Madame Guyon with Madame de Maintenon became somewhat intimate, so much so that she was often invited to the royal palace at Versailles, and was introduced to the celebrated institution at St. Cyr. Being given liberty to visit the young ladies there, she talked with them on religious subjects, and speedily acquired the strongest possible influence over them. This soon brought her name into general notice, and excited once more intense hostility. One of her servants was bribed to poison her, and almost succeeded. She suffered from the effects for seven years. It is at this time that Bossuet—confessedly

the leader of the French Church by reason of reputation, learning, and intellectual strength—became alarmed at the reports he heard of the strange influence of this woman in high quarters, and determined to put forth his splendid powers for the extinction of what he deemed a new heresy. His first interview with her took place in September, 1693, his second, January 30, 1694. He found much to admire in her positions, but he judged by the head rather than the heart, and was not fully satisfied. Accordingly she wrote to Madame de Maintenon, asking that a number of suitable persons might be selected to carefully examine her doctrines and her morals; for her character as well as her teachings had been loudly assailed, as is customary in such situations. The king approved of the plan, and appointed three commissioners, the most eminent for virtues and talents that could well be selected, which was a marked tribute to the intellectual power and personal influence of Madame Guyon. They were Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux; M. Tronson, Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice; and M. de Noailles, Bishop of Chalons, afterwards the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris. These persons had many meetings in 1694 and 1695, and drew up what were known as the Articles of Issy. Fénelon, being on terms of the greatest intimacy with these three theologians, was in frequent communication with them concerning the matter, and was often consulted, especially by Bossuet, while the articles were

being framed. When they were completed he was asked to sign them, which, after a few changes and the addition of four articles which he deemed essential to prevent misconception, he gladly did. Even Madame Guyon gave her assent to them, although they bore rather hardly on some of her positions, without mentioning her name, and were expressly designed to protect the public against her alleged extravagances.

She was at this time in a sort of confinement in the Convent of St. Mary, in Meaux, under Bossuet's supervision. He had many interviews with her, and, in a letter to the prioress of the convent, said expressly that "he had examined the writings of Madame Guyon with great care, and found in them nothing censurable, with the exception of some terms which were not wholly conformed to the strictness of theology; but that a woman was not expected to be a theologian." He also, at her desire, after six months' residence, gave her a certificate speaking in the most favorable terms of her character and conduct. But no sooner was she again in Paris than her enemies started at once into life. The king was alarmed lest Quietism—a system of faith and practice at the complete antipodes from his own—should gain further currency, and Madame de Maintenon, taking her cue from him, as she always did, ranged herself promptly with its enemies. Bossuet also, finding that he had been more lenient toward her than was politic, demanded

back from Madame Guyon his certificate. This she could not consent to surrender, and he set himself with full determination to crush her. December 27, 1695, she was arrested and incarcerated in the castle of Vincennes, where she underwent for nine months a very severe imprisonment. She says: "I passed my time in great peace, content to spend the remainder of my life there if such should be the will of God. I employed part of my time in writing religious songs." In August, 1696, she was transferred to another prison at Vaugiraud, a village near Paris, where she remained till September, 1698, and was then immured in one of the stern, dark towers of the dreaded Bastile, where she remained four years more in solitary confinement. Just previous to her commitment there she writes: "I feel no anxiety in view of what my enemies will do to me. I have no fear of anything but of being left to myself. So long as God is with me, neither imprisonment nor death will have any terrors." A little later she writes: "I, being in the Bastile, said to Thee, O my God, if Thou art pleased to render me a spectacle to men and angels, Thy holy will be done. All that I ask is that Thou wilt be with me and save those who love Thee. As for me, what matters it what men think of me or what they make me suffer, since they can not separate me from that Savior whose name is engraven in the very bottom of my heart. If I can only be accepted of Him, I am willing that all men should despise and hate me.

Their strokes will polish what may be defective in me, so that I may be presented in peace to Him for whom I die daily." Her language was:

"In vain they smite me. Men but do
What God permits with different view:
To outward sight they hold the rod,
But faith proclaims it all of God."

And similar are the beautiful words of her hymn:

"My Lord, how full of sweet content,
I pass my years of banishment!
Where'er I dwell I dwell with Thee,
In heaven, in earth, or on the sea.
To me remains nor place nor time:
My country is in every clime;
I can be calm and free from care
On any shore since God is there.

While place we seek or place we shun,
The soul finds happiness in none;
But with a God to guide our way,
'T is equal joy to go or stay.
Could I be cast where Thou art not,
That were indeed a dreadful lot;
But regions none remote I call,
Secure of finding God in all."

She made no complaints of those who so cruelly used her. "They believed that they did well," was her only comment. The Spirit of her Savior was with her: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." In her biography, written later, she says, "I entreat all such persons as shall read this narrative not to indulge in hard or embittered

feelings against those who have treated me with unkindness." Her sufferings were terrible, but the fortitude and resolution with which she endured them, the steadfastness of her faith, and the meekness of her bearing, are worthy of all praise. She does not seem to have doubted for a moment the goodness and truth of God. Her theories were put to the severest of tests, and they did not fail her. It is marvelous that she lived to emerge from the gloomy walls that were the grave of such numbers, or that the tyrannical, bigoted king ever relented so far as to let her go forth. She was liberated when fifty-four years of age (it being evident that she could not survive another year of imprisonment), reduced to great feebleness, her constitution utterly shattered. Yet her enemies were still afraid to let her stay in the neighborhood of Paris; so she was banished for the rest of her life to Blois, one hundred miles away, on the river Loire. There, subjected to constant maladies which often brought her to the verge of death, but supported by abundant spiritual consolations, she did good as she had opportunity to the great numbers of people who came to see her. Her departure from earth occurred June 9, 1717, and was both peaceful and triumphant. Just before death, writing to her brother, she says, "Whatever may happen, turn not your eye back upon the world; look forward and onward to the heavenly mansions: be strong in faith, fight courageously the battles of the Lord."

Writing to another friend, and referring to her pains, which she said were so great as to call into exercise all the resources and aids of faith, she adds: "Grace was triumphant. It is trying to nature, but I can still say in this last struggle that I love the Hand that smites me." She said in her last hours, "I rely for my salvation, not on any good works in myself, but on Thy mercies, O my God, and on the merits and sufferings of my Lord Jesus Christ." She had no faith in the doctrine of transubstantiation, read the Scriptures much, and urged others to study them, insisting constantly upon the necessity of a real sanctification of the heart by the Holy Spirit. That she was one of the high saints of God, her soul a real temple of the Holy Ghost, can in no way be questioned. It is also certain that she had great intellectual power, and in the main taught most important and sacred truth. It is easy to find fault with many of her expressions, but her spirit is beyond praise. That she did on the whole a grand good work and will have a high place in glory, we are fully convinced.

We come now to the great conflict between Bossuet and Fénelon. Up to this time they had been friends, at least outwardly. But there are grounds for believing that Fénelon's growing and prospective influence aroused the envy of the ambitious Bossuet, who, no more than the king, was disposed to brook a rival; and the Quietist controversy speedily took on a character which brought the two bishops

into the most direct antagonism. Bossuet completed, after long labor, early in 1696, an exceedingly able book against Quietism, entitled "Instructions on the States of Prayer." He secured the approval of the other members of the Conference at Issy, and wished to append a favorable testimonial from Fénelon also. The latter examined the manuscript with care, and was obliged to withhold his indorsement. He did so on two grounds: He thought it contained an absolutely unqualified denial of the possibility of the pure, disinterested love of God; and he considered its censures of Madame Guyon too personal and too severe. He was perfectly aware that the refusal to comply with the wishes of Bossuet would be a mortal offense to that haughty, self-willed prelate, and would also displease the king, probably blasting his worldly prospects. But as a man of honor and of true Christian principle he could not and did not hesitate. Writing to M. Tronson at this time, he says, "Am I wrong in wishing not to believe evil sooner than can be helped, and in refusing to curry favor by acting against my conscience?" He declared that he would not attack "a poor woman who is trodden down by so many, and whose friend I have been," for the sake of dispelling suspicion against himself; that he would not speak against his conscience or recklessly insult a person whom he had respected as a saint. "It would be infamous weakness in me," he said, "to speak doubtfully in relation to her char-

acter in order to free myself from oppression." Other extracts from his letters at this time, had we space to give them, would show conclusively the high ground he took, the only ground which his own character and self-respect, as well as his feeling of gratitude toward the persecuted woman, could possibly permit. Had he done otherwise, what would the world now think of him?

His chief friends approved his course, but insisted that he must write his views in full. He did so, producing his elaborate work called "The Maxims of the Saints," published in January, 1697. Without naming Madame Guyon, it was in fact her defense, the exposition of her opinions as he understood them, and as she had explained them to him in private. It was hailed as a golden work by Cardinal de Noailles, M. Tronson, the Bishop of Chartres, and many other leading men of France.[1] But Bossuet was roused to fury. "Take your own measures," he said to these men; "I will raise my voice to the heavens against these errors so well known to you; I will complain to Rome, and to the whole earth. It shall not be said that the cause of God is weakly betrayed. Though I should stand singly in it, I will advocate it." But none better knew than he that so far from standing singly in it he had the warmest possible backing from the king.

[1] Fénelon, on sending the manuscript to the Archbishop of Paris used these words: 'I have done what I believed to be my duty, and I leave the rest to God. I do not care about my work. I am not even anxious about truth, God will care for it."

Louis XIV had no love for Fénelon. He had raised him to certain dignities, partly because of his uncommon abilities, and partly because of his favor with the public, rather than as a sign of any personal attachment. Fénelon was, throughout his life, the very embodiment of all that Louis did not like, and this, considering Louis' character, was one of his chief glories. The two men were so far apart in most things, and their minds were so differently constituted that there was no common bond of sympathy, and the only wonder is how they got along together as well as they did. Fénelon, while possessing a great superiority of genius, exhibited also an elevation of moral and personal character of which the king stood in awe, and he was glad that the accusation of heresy gave him a good opportunity to be rid of his uncomfortable presence.

The battle was now on, and it was between two giants. Bossuet, the eagle, was essentially masculine, marked by solidity, vigor, and logic. Fénelon, the swan, was essentially feminine, filled with tenderness, spiritual enthusiasm, aspiration. Bossuet had the experience of age, Fénelon the full powers of middle manhood; Bossuet had the greater skill in argument, Fénelon the richer imagination. Bossuet in style, it has been said, reminds one of the expansive and philosophical mind of Burke, combined with the heavy strength and dictatorial manner of Johnson. Fénelon had a large share of the luxuriant imagination of Jeremy Taylor, chastened by

the refined taste and classic ease of Addison. Fénelon was naturally mild and forbearing in disposition, but inflexible in his principles and incapable of being influenced by pleasures on the one hand, or by threats on the other; he was amiable without weakness, firm without bitterness. Bossuet, on the other hand, was a man of strong passions, accustomed to ascendency, impatient of opposition, and, as the contest went on, irritated by the unexpected difficulties he encountered, he resorted to means for the carrying of his cause which have left a lasting stain upon his name. But Fénelon came forth from the ordeal, even as John Fletcher did in his controversy with Toplady, elevated all the higher in the admiration of mankind. Bossuet, in the course of the contest, referring to one of Fénelon's publications, made the following remark: "His friends say everywhere that his reply is a triumphant work, and that he has great advantages in it over me. We shall see hereafter whether it is so." Fénelon thereupon addressed a letter to Bossuet in the following terms: "May heaven forbid that I should strive for victory over any person, least of all over you. It is not man's victory, but God's glory which I seek; and happy, thrice happy shall I be if that object is secured, though it should be attended with my confusion and with your triumph. There is no occasion, therefore, to say, 'We shall see who will have the advantage.' I am ready now, without waiting for future developments, to acknowledge

that you are my superior in science, in genius, in everything that usually commands attention. And in respect to the controversy between us, there is nothing which I wish more than to be vanquished by you if the positions which I take are wrong. Two things only do I desire—*truth* and *peace;* truth which may enlighten, and peace which may unite us."

The two combatants put forth all their strength, and the conflict attracted the eyes of all Europe. Book followed book in close and quick succession on both sides. Each of the antagonists showed a thorough mastery of the subject, and exerted himself to the utmost, stimulated by the importance of the struggle and the large issues at stake, not only of a personal nature but of a general character. The whole Christian world looked on with deep interest.

The chief doctrine that Fénelon set himself to defend is summarized by Upham in the following three propositions: "First, the provisions of the Gospel are such that men may gain the entire victory over their sinful propensities, and may live in constant and accepted communion with God; second, persons are in this state when they love God with all their heart; in other words, with pure or unselfish love; third, there have been instances of Christians, though probably few in number, who, so far as can be decided by man's imperfect judgment, have reached this state, and it is the duty of all, encouraged by the ample provision which is made, to

strive to attain to it." But the main issue was speedily confused with an abundance of side questions, particular sentences and parts of sentences being picked out for attack, much space being taken, as in all such cases, with merely verbal criticisms founded on misconceptions or on the necessary imperfection of language. The celebrated Leibnitz remarked that, before the war of words between Bossuet and Fénelon began, the prelates should have agreed on a definition of the word love, and that such a definition might have prevented the dispute. The worst thing was that Bossuet, driven to extremities by the trouble he found in making headway theologically and fearing defeat, descended to a personal attack on Fénelon's character, insinuating things which he had not the audacity to state plainly or the facts to substantiate. This, of course, reacted. For Fénelon—against his own wishes, but being shown the necessity of it by his friends—wrote a marvelous reply, of which Charles Butler, one of his biographers, and by no means a partisan one, says: "A nobler effusion of the indignation of insulted virtue and genius, eloquence has never produced. In the very first lines of it Fénelon placed himself above his antagonist, and to the last preserves his elevation. Never did genius and virtue obtain a more complete triumph. Fénelon's reply, by a kind of enchantment, restored to him every heart. Crushed by the strong arm of power, abandoned by the multitude, there was nothing to which

he could look but his own powers. Obliged to fight for his honor, it was necessary for him, if he did not consent to sink under the accusation, to assume a port still more imposing than that of his mighty antagonist. Much had been expected from him; but none supposed that he would raise himself to so prodigious a height as would not only repel the attack of his antagonist but entirely reduce him to the defensive."

It was seen at an early period of the controversy that there was no probability of its being settled by any tribunal short of that of the pope himself. Fénelon, seeing the unscrupulous, powerful forces that were arrayed against him in Paris, applied to the king in July, 1697, for permission to go to Rome under any restrictions His Majesty might think appropriate. This the monarch absolutely refused, knowing well, no doubt, that the personal charm of the saintly disputant would be likely to carry everything before it. He would only permit him to send agents there to act in his behalf. Fénelon himself he curtly ordered to proceed immediately to his diocese, to remain there, and not to stop in Paris on the way any longer than his affairs made his stay absolutely necessary. Fénelon received this undeserved sentence of banishment, very roughly couched, with his customary calmness and submission. In passing through the city he stopped before the seminary of St. Sulpice, where he had spent so many happy hours, and which he was never to see

again; but he forbore from entering the house lest his showing a regard for it might expose its inhabitants to His Majesty's displeasure. The king, with his own hands, some time after this, crossed off Fénelon's name from the list of court officials, and also dismissed from service every one connected with him, save only the Abbé Fleury, who, though a devoted friend of the archbishop, had never taken any part in the exciting topics of the day. But the rest who had been employed about the Duke of Burgundy for nine years, not blamelessly alone but how successfully his altered character and advanced education could show, were rudely sent off without any acknowledgment whatever of their valuable services, without even a civil word or a penny of reward.

And how went matters at Rome? The Abbé de Chanterac, an intimate friend and relation, of highest probity and piety, was Fénelon's agent there. The Abbé Bossuet, a nephew of the bishop, a vulgar, blustering, unscrupulous fellow, with a most violent, intemperate spirit, fitly represented the interests of his uncle. The pope, Innocent XII, a man of a benevolent and equitable temper, found his position a very difficult one, somewhat similar to that of Pilate at the trial of Jesus. His sympathies were wholly with Fénelon, and there is no doubt that he would gladly have given a verdict in his favor, or dismissed the whole matter, could he have done so without mortally offending the king. He had at

first hoped that the business might be settled in France by mild and conciliatory measures, and had expressed this wish to Louis; but the suggestion was entirely unavailing. So he was obliged to take up the very unpleasant task. He appointed a commission of ten persons called "Consulters" to give a thorough examination of Fénelon's books. But after sixty-four successive and protracted sittings of six or seven hours each, at many of which the pope himself assisted, they found themselves so evenly divided in relation to it that no satisfactory result could reasonably be expected from the continuance of their deliberations. The pope accordingly selected a commission of cardinals to pronounce upon the matter; but after twelve sittings they were unable to come to any conclusion, and were dissolved. Next a new congregation of cardinals were selected, and met in consultation no less than fifty-two times without getting on very far. The long delays and the hesitation shown at Rome to condemn Fénelon were utterly unexpected by either Bossuet or the king, and made them furious. Constantly increasing pressure was brought to bear from Paris to secure the result pleasing to the monarch.

At the very beginning, in July, 1697, the king, by Bossuet's instigation, wrote an urgent letter to the pope calling upon him speedily to condemn Fénelon's book. Missive after missive of similar purport went forward, and all the arts of diplomacy,

all the influences which Louis could in any way exert, were unblushingly employed for Fénelon's overthrow. Affairs at Rome, indeed, before long involved themselves into a perfect tangle of chicanery and intrigue, cardinal against cardinal, ambassador against ambassador. Other courts besides that of France took a hand. The imperial ambassador worked hard for Fénelon; the Spanish minister was zealous on the other side; and a smaller potentate, Cosmo, Grand Duke of Tuscany, a dabbler in theology, threw his weight in the latter direction. The poor pope was violently pulled, now this way, now that. He greatly liked Fénelon, admiring his beautiful spirit and appreciating his loyal attachment to the Holy See. He resented the disgraceful attempt to browbeat him on the part of the desperate king and the Bishop of Meaux, a pragmatical, pugnacious bully. He could scarcely see any way of censuring any of Fénelon's propositions without censuring also other writers of the same sort, like St. Bernard and St. Francis of Sales, whom the Church had delighted to honor. It seemed to him also, as was indeed the case, almost if not quite wholly a dispute about words. As to a habitual state of disinterested Divine love, the attainment of which was said to be inculcated in Fénelon's writings, Fénelon himself uniformly declared his opinion that a permanent state of Divine love, without hope and without fear, was above the lot of man. And Bossuet himself allowed that there might be

moments when the soul, dedicated to the love of God, would be lost in heavenly contemplation, and then love and adore without being influenced by either hope or fear, or being sensible of either. Their real ground of difference was, after all, very small, and there was much to be said on both sides. And, under all these circumstances, it is scarcely surprising that it took so long to reach a decision.

It was postponed from month to month in the hope that some chance—the death of the king or of Bossuet—might relieve the pressure, and allow the papal conscience its rights as against the papal policy. As late as the autumn of 1698, a whole year after the conference of the ten "Consulters" began, five of them persisted, in defiance of every pressure that could be brought to bear upon them, in pronouncing the book to be absolutely orthodox, and so proceedings had to be begun again. The real issue of the struggle had probably never been doubtful in case the French court insisted. For, as the cardinals said: "It will not do to fire great guns at the king. Rome's wisest course demands of her to yield to him whatever may be yielded without wounding the first principles of religion." It is absolutely certain that, but for this unseemly influence, the decision would have been in Fénelon's favor. As it was, the pope and his advisers struggled hard to wriggle out of their dilemma with as little violence to their feelings and their honor as they could. After it was settled that they must in some way

give the decision as the king so imperatively demanded, there were a great many meetings of the Conclave to decide on the precise form it should take. This required months of wrangling and debate. It was at first intended to issue a simple brief, distinctly affirming that His Holiness did not intend to condemn the author's explanations of his book, but giving some general disapproval of certain inferences drawn from it, and asserting the Church's true doctrine as opposed to the Quietists, without casting any blame on the Archbishop of Cambrai. This would have been done had not Bossuet's agents at Rome, assisted by the Cardinal Cassanata, a man of most imperious will and overbearing temper, exerted themselves to the utmost, fortified by fresh letters from the king dictated by Bossuet, insisting, with hardly veiled threats of the direful consequences that would ensue from disobedience, that the decision be "clear, precise, capable of no misinterpretation, such as is necessary to remove all doubt with regard to doctrine and eradicate the very root of the evil." Thus badgered and driven and terrified, there seemed to be nothing to do but submit; so at length, on the 12th of March, the whole Sacred College was assembled at the palace of Monte Cavallo, where the decree was accepted by the whole body of cardinals, signed by the pope in their presence, and immediately posted in all the principal public places of Rome.

The book itself, strictly speaking, was not con-

demned, but only twenty-three propositions which purported to be extracted from it. The pope took pains to say, and to have it clearly understood, that they were condemned, not in the sense which they might bear or in the sense in which they were explained by Fénelon himself. The propositions were said to be condemned because, not being worded in conformity with the author's real intentions, they might insensibly lead the faithful to errors already condemned by the Catholic Church; because they contained words which, in the sense that more immediately presented itself were rash, ill-sounding, offensive to pious ears, and erroneous. The cardinals refused to associate the name of heretic, or of anything resembling heresy, with Fénelon—his name, indeed, was not once mentioned in the brief —and they absolutely rejected the usual appendage to a brief of condemnation, an order for the book to be burned. Very little was really decided. The words were very gentle, and in important ways noncommittal. Disinterestedness in the larger sense was neither asserted nor denied; all that was done was to prune Fénelon's system of what might be considered its extravagances. In pronouncing, on the whole, against the "Maxims," Rome had not really declared for Bossuet. Fénelon could lawfully tell his friends that disinterestedness was not condemned, but only its exaggerated statement; self-interest had not been made an essential condition of our love of God,—it was still possible to love

Him for Himself, provided that hope and desire of heaven were not habitually of set purpose excluded. All this soothed the sorrows of the friends of Fénelon's, as it was designed to do, and considerably mortified his enemies, which mortification was increased by a *bon mot* of the pope, which was soon in every mouth, that "Fénelon was in fault for too great love of God; and his enemies equally in fault for too little love of their neighbor." The pope, indeed, had repeatedly called Fénelon "a very great archbishop, most pious, most holy, most learned;" and he gave to the Abbé de Chanterac every indication of the extreme reluctance with which he moved in the matter.

It was, on the whole, a very barren victory for Bossuet; but he accepted it rather than run any further risk in the long-drawn-out contest, of which all parties were thoroughly weary. It had cost him dear in both reputation and character. No one now, however small his admiration for Fénelon, attempts to defend the steps which Bossuet took or the dishonorable means to which in his desperation he resorted to compass his end. He contended not lawfully, and deserves no crown. He showed an irritation, rancor, bitterness, and malignity most lamentable; used invective, artifice, and garbled quotations; sullied himself forever by the course he took. With brutal irony and savage harshness he hectored, threatened, plotted, violated confidences, and made accusations as base as they were reckless. He

used without scruple secret writings which he had received from Madame Guyon, private letters written to him by Fénelon during their early intimacy, and a letter which, under the seal of friendship, Fénelon had written to Madame de Maintenon, and which in this trying hour she unfeelingly communicated to Bossuet, having entirely changed in her attitude toward him since the king's animosity was evident. Bossuet's personal charges against his amiable and estimable adversary, not believed by any one, showed the innate smallness of his nature, the desperate strait to which he was driven, and the degree to which he had let jealousy and rivalry of one greater than he take possession of his bosom. That he himself was of plebeian birth —a bar which kept him from the goal of his ambition in the cardinalate—while Fénelon was of the patricians, had doubtless something to do with it. He squandered his waning powers on a controversy which added no luster to his reputation, and brought him no nearer to the summit of his desires. Too late he realized that it was impossible to ruin such a man as Fénelon in the eyes of those who had learned to love him. He might be banished from the Vatican and from Versailles, silenced by the pope, and disgraced by the king, but he was cherished none the less in the hearts of the devout, idolized and adored as an oracle of piety and virtue.

Fénelon was not once betrayed into abuse or slander throughout the struggle in which he had so

much at stake. No unkind word respecting any of his persecutors escaped him. He continually exhibited wonderful gentleness and dignity, elevated self-respect, the urbanity of a refined gentleman, and the grace of an exalted Christian. His style was forcible and effective, but with no mixture of sarcasm. Posterity has done him justice; has affirmed that throughout this contest no stain rests upon his moral character, and that he was absolutely sincere when he said, "I ask God to grant M. de Meaux as many blessings as he has heaped crosses upon me;" *curses,* he might have said. All this while his enemies were using every means "to hunt him down like a wild beast;" this was the expression they used. "Never once," says a person who has thoroughly examined the entire correspondence, "in the mass of letters that Fénelon sent to his confidential agent at Rome, do we come across a mean or unjust expression; there is not one letter that one feels inclined to wish had not been kept for the sake of the writer." As attack after attack descends upon him, intended to humiliate and crush, he rises above it, greater and nobler, more faithful in following his Master's footsteps than ever. He continually implored the pope to stop the endless war of pamphlets which was doing so much harm to the cause of religion and the Church. It was with the greatest reluctance that he was forced into the fight. Under the grossest of libels he would have remained silent had his friends consented. But

he was compelled by the actions of his adversaries to speak out sometimes with great vigor. And he had to obey the voice of his conscience and the dictates of chivalry, being thoroughly indignant at the unjust treatment accorded to his friend, Madame Guyon. His grief at the rupture of the bond between him and Bossuet was deep and sincere. He wrote, "God alone knows what pain it is to me to give pain to one for whom, in all the world, I have the most attachment and respect." He wrote this even when he was defending himself from the most virulent attacks; and he would not have called God to witness to a profession that was not absolutely true. By his candor and simplicity, his openness and gentleness, the beauty of his genius, and the reputation of his virtue, he commanded the widest possible respect from all who were capable of appreciating these things. His challenge to his maligners rang out without ambiguity: "I fear nothing, thank God, that will be communicated and examined judicially. I fear nothing but vague report and unexamined allegation."

Fénelon, when the decision at Rome was communicated to him, acted as his friends had expected, although some of them had hardly dared hope that even he could rise so magnificently to the occasion. He accepted, simply, sincerely, sweetly, with no reservation or concealment or half-heartedness, what he regarded as, under the circumstances, the voice of God. His brother, the Compte de Fénelon,

heard the tidings first in Paris, and started instantly for Cambrai, thinking that the reception of the news through a kindly channel might at least lighten somewhat the blow. He arrived on the Festival of the Annunciation, just as the archbishop was about to preach in the cathedral. However keenly he felt the blow—and he was, of course, human—he was not disconcerted, or cast down, or perplexed. Pausing a little to arrange his thoughts, he threw aside his intended sermon, and preached on the duty of absolute submission to authority. The congregation, among whom the news was already whispered, was most profoundly impressed with the calm dignity, the noble simplicity of their beloved chief pastor; and the eyes of most overflowed with tears of admiration, affection, grief, and respect as they listened to his heartfelt words.

He was not a little harassed, as the days went on, by some zealous, well-meaning folk, who feared that he might not do the best thing, and wrote him long exhortations to submit, telling him of the glory he would find in such humiliation and the heroism he would achieve. He wrote to Beauvilliers: "All this wearies me somewhat; and I am disposed to say to myself, What have I done to all these people that they think I shall find it so difficult to prefer the authority of the Holy See to my own dim knowledge, or the peace of the Church to my own book? However, I am well aware they are right in attributing large imperfections to me and much

shrinking from an act of humiliation; therefore I can easily forgive them." He wrote: "Doubtless it costs one something to humble one's self; but the least resistance to the Holy See would cost me a hundred-fold more, and I must confess that I can see no room for hesitation in the matter. One may suffer, but one can not have a moment's doubt." He also said: "Amid these troubles I have the comfort, little appreciated by the world, but very satisfactory to those who seek God heartily, namely, that my course is clear, and I have nothing to hesitate about."

His enemies sought in vain to find a flaw in his submission. One of his followers wrote: "Your conduct is a living exemplification of the maxims of the saints;" as indeed it was. The dignified humility with which he met misfortune gave him added reputation. He sent out a pastoral letter, short and affecting, which comforted his friends and afflicted his enemies, falsifying every prediction which they had made of the nice subtleties and distinctions with which he would seek to disguise his defeat. His letters at this time breathed in all cases the most amiable spirit of peace and resignation. But in general he declined all writing and discourse on the subject, and at an early moment dismissed the controversy as far as possible from his thoughts. The Bishop of Chartres wrote to Fénelon that he was delighted with his perfect submission: "I have no words to express how my heart

is affected with your humble and generous action." The pope wrote most kindly, and all the cardinals, except Cassanata, sent messages to Fénelon by the Abbé de Chanterac, conveying their respect and attachment. "It is impossible," wrote the abbé, "to praise more than they did your submission, your pastoral letter, your letters to the pope, and the whole of your conduct." As one eminent person wrote from Rome, "He was more glorious than if he had never been condemned." The Chancellor d'Aguesseau writes that Fénelon's submission made him the hero of the day. "It stands the solitary example in history of a controversy upon a point of such moment which one single sentence terminated at the instant, without its reproduction in any other form, without any attempt to reverse it by power or elude it by distinctions. The glory of it is due to Fénelon, who was able to see that a very great desire to justify one's self often does more harm than good, and that the surest way to obliterate wrongs unjustly imputed is to let them be forgotten and die out in silence."

Fénelon said, "In all this, so far from referring it to my opponents, I see no human agent; I see God only, and I am content to accept what He does." "In the name of God," he writes to a friend, "speak to me only of God, and leave men to judge of me as they like. As for me, I shall seek only peace and silence." He had no resentment toward any one; but he steadily refused, with proper dig-

nity and uncompromising adherence to the right, to utter one syllable which could be perverted into a semblance of retraction. He said that since the head of the Church, with its superior light and authority, had so judged, he must believe himself to have insufficiently explained his meaning, but he declared, in justice to himself, that he never understood the text, or supposed any one else could understand it, save in the sole sense which he had himself assigned to it. While ready at all times to meet his opponents in the humblest and most peaceful spirit, as he declared, he declined to enter into any negotiations that would imply a yielding of what concerned his conscience or his sense of truth in order to win them. He ceased to write and converse upon the subject from this time. But in the discharge of his duties among his own people and in his correspondence, he never ceased to inculcate the doctrine of pure love. He thought it his duty to avoid certain forms of expression, and certain illustrations which had been specifically condemned in the Papal Decree, and which were liable to be misconceived, but he went no further. How could he? Nor do we find that room to wonder, which some have done, at the heartiness and promptness of his submission to what he doubtless felt was, from a human point of view, unjust. He refused to confine himself to the human point of view. He held, with General Charles George Gordon, and many others in our own day, that, however we may rightly

struggle to alter events while they are in the process of formation, when once they have come to pass they register a decree of the Almighty, and any reluctance to receive them is rebellion against Him, something not to be thought of by a truly loyal heart. This theory and practice made earth to him very heavenly, and life a triumphant march.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GOOD ARCHBISHOP.

It is now our privilege to bid farewell to the noise of battle, and look at the good archbishop in the peaceful retirement of his great diocese, where, as all admit, his episcopal duties were perfectly performed. Even the most captious carpers and cavilers at Fénelon, who can see little or no good in any other part of his life and try hard to find some unworthy motive at the bottom of the acts that seem so fair, are sore put to it, when they come to this portion, to withhold a meed of hearty praise. They are forced to admit that his misfortunes have helped his character, and that he shines forth with a luster rarely, if ever, equaled. What he would have become spiritually had the world continued to smile upon him is, of course, unknown. Had Louis XIV died and the Duke of Burgundy come to the throne, Fénelon would undoubtedly have reached the cardinalate for which his birth and abilities so well fitted him, and might even have gone higher. But it is not likely that, in the vitiated atmosphere of the court, and surrounded by the temptations inevitably awaiting on unclouded success, his character could have developed as it did in affliction.

Some measure of adversity seems to be essential to bring out the best there is in us. His career has been called by some superficial observers "a splendid failure," but the words have no meaning except in the sense in which they might be used of Jesus of Nazareth and a multitude of others who have stood for the highest ideals and have died nobly fighting against wrong. Fénelon did not falter in his course; he obeyed at eve "the voice obeyed at prime;" he held to the end the supreme purpose which had inspired his earliest reflections. But his years of exile, spent in the single-hearted service of his people, are a more impressive and edifying conclusion to a life begun under the auspices of St. Sulpice than if they had been attended with all the glories of the papal court. His reverses of fortune gave him an admirable opportunity, magnificently improved, to show that his high theories of resignation and self-surrender, and a serene acceptance of everything from God's hand, could work well in practice. Under the stress of his troubles he gained new depth and breadth of piety, new self-reliance and self-control, larger tranquillity, a more thoroughly compacted character.

Cambrai, to which he was banished in 1697, and where he spent the last eighteen years of his life, was a town of no great size or beauty, on the river Scheldt, in the extreme north, near the Flemish frontier. It was the ecclesiastical center of the Flemish provinces which were conquered during the

early half of the reign of Louis XIV, and confirmed to France by the treaty of Nimwegen in 1678. Formerly a dependency of the chaotic Empire, there still clung around it some of the prestige of departed glories when its bishop's jurisdiction extended over Brussels, and he governed the territory with almost the power of an independent sovereign, having his own fortresses and garrisons and mint. Fénelon himself ranked both as a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire and as a Duke of France, and, though possessing no feudal privileges, he was still the principal landholder of the province, with a floating revenue of some hundred thousand francs, perhaps about a hundred thousand dollars in modern money. It was one of the first positions in the kingdom; but it had some serious drawbacks, especially as a place of permanent residence. He had said on receiving the appointment, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit; I am entering on a state of perpetual servitude in a strange land." The people there were Flemings, not Frenchmen, in their language, their habits, their modes of thought, with little refinement of any kind, their virtues as coarse-fibered as their manners. It was no small privation for a man like Fénelon—born for Olympus as it were, bred to the best society, and fitted to shine in it with so much luster, and in a time when, even more than now, everything centered around the court at the capital—to be shut out from it all, losing the sympathy and friendship which his earlier years had

brought him, the daily intercourse with minds that reflected his own thoughts yet inspired and exhilarated him. For one in the flower of his manhood and at the zenith of his capacities, possessing the gift of language in a marvelous degree, with a filled and cultured brain, to be thrown so absolutely out of his element, out of the world of books and intellectual equals, exiled to a remote corner of the realm amid strangers, was a calamity whose gravity, on one side, it would be wrong to overlook. His sufferings, as nature goes, must have been acute. Yet he speedily adjusted himself to the situation, and there is no note of repining. For mere court favors, its dignities, pomps, and pleasures, he had no real love, and his whole life bears witness to the truth of his often repeated assertions, that he had no wish to return to Paris or Versailles; no wish, that is, under the divinely appointed circumstances; for he was able always to find in such circumstances his highest pleasure. Writing to the Duke de Beauvilliers in November, 1699, he says: "I am sorry, dear duke, to be separated from you, the dear duchess, and a very few other friends. But for all else I rejoice in being away; I sing my canticle of thanksgiving for deliverance, and nothing would cost me so much as to have to return."

He by no means settled down into "a state of passive quietism," as some ignorantly prate, wholly misconceiving both quietism and the man. The slightest scanning of the records shows how beau-

tifully and zealously active his last years were. If ever a man threw himself into the interests of others, or made the deep love of God, which he breathed as his native air, take loving shape in strenuous acts, it was Fénelon. He was quiet, even as was Madame Guyon, and as all other high saints have been, in so far as to rest with an absolute, unhesitating, unquestioning faith in God's keeping, asking nothing save that His will might be perfected in him; but he was most active and energetic in body, soul, and spirit for his neighbor's good. The unremitting labors which he undertook, and which his vast diocese if properly administered demanded, involved a life of the most regular industry. He gave but a short time to sleep, and his working hours began early, so that he had done nearly a day's work before saying mass. His habit was to say this in his own chapel, after a long time spent previously in prayer, except on Saturdays, when he said it in the cathedral, remaining there to hear the confessions of penitents of any and every class who chose to present themselves. He not infrequently preached in the cathedral, but seems to have preferred the town churches, in some one of which he always preached the Lenten discourses. He made no effort at oratory, aiming chiefly to be plain and intelligible, excluding from his sermons superfluous ornaments as well as obscurity and difficult reasonings. He preached from the heart rather than from the head, and generally without notes, but not with-

out much meditation and prayer. He used to say, "I must spend much time in my closet in order to be prepared for the pulpit, and to be sure that my heart is filled from the Divine fountain before I pour out the streams upon the people." He declared against the practice of committing sermons to writing and then learning them by heart.

To his clergy he was a father and brother in God, gathering them about him as constantly as possible for instruction and inspiration, moving among them with the utmost wisdom, correcting, advising, assisting. One of his first cares was the improvement of the seminary for completing the education of those who were preparing for the Church. It had been at Valenciennes, but he removed it to Cambrai, that it might be under his own eye. It was his great desire to reconstruct it on the lines of the seminary at St. Sulpice, where he himself had been so profited, and to intrust the supervision of the students to priests who were members of that congregation; but he found insuperable obstacles to this scheme in the fear of M. Tronson lest any direct connection between St. Sulpice and Cambrai might draw down upon the former the king's displeasure. So Fénelon appointed to the head of it his intimate friend, the Abbé de Chanterac, formerly his agent at Rome, saying, "He has the wit, the piety, and the wisdom to govern it peacefully." But Fénelon devoted great personal care to the students, examining them himself, and endeavoring to estimate their

individual capacities. Besides the instruction he gave them during periods of retreat, and at the chief festivals, he conducted conferences once a week, listening with infinite patience to their difficulties and replying with the kindness of a father. No priest proceeded to ordination until he had been five times examined by Fénelon himself. In short, no pains were spared to make the priests of this diocese an example to their degenerate colleagues.

In the general administration of his diocese he concentrated all his powers, allowing nothing to escape him, erring, if at all, on the side of mercy and toleration, finding it difficult to believe many of the charges brought against his clergy, and only convinced by the most conclusive evidence. He abstained from unnecessary acts of authority, avoided all unnecessary display, removed what was blamable by meekness and moderation, improved with prudence and sobriety what was good. His administration was uniformly wise, strict in some respects, and yet on broad and liberal lines. There was no harrying of Protestants or Jansenists, no bureaucratic fussiness, no seeking after popularity, but every man, great or small, was treated exactly as was becoming. Between him and his flock, his chapter, or his clergy, there was no discord. Though by his indefatigable zeal he soon made the district committed to his charge the model of a well-regulated diocese, his biographers do not record of him a single instance of what are generally called

acts of vigor, or a single instance of gaudy virtue. The peace of heaven was with him, and was communicated to all around. All local customs, down to the humblest, were handled with a delicate touch, and pardonable eccentricities of usage were never dealt with severely. In the matter of patronage he was careful that no outsider, and still less no relative of his own, should swoop down on the richest livings and secure by interest what the natives naturally looked upon as their own by right. He traveled throughout the district, making tours of inspection several times a year, and so coming into touch with every corner, preaching more than once in every one of the six hundred parishes.

The laity adored him for his charities, for the gentle firmness of his government, for the natural grace of manner that enhanced a hundred-fold the value of everything he said and did. Always ready to help, yet always modest in offering assistance, he seemed when about some kindly action to be receiving rather than doing a favor. He was always a perfect gentleman, a high-bred man of rank, a model of politeness, and was equally adapted to every grade of society. Men of all classes were at ease in his company. He directed every one to the subject he best understood, and then disappeared himself, thus giving them an opportunity to produce out of their own stock the materials they were most able to furnish. Thus every one parted from him well pleased with himself. Perhaps no one ever

possessed in a higher degree the happy talent of easy conversation. His mind was entirely given up to the person with whom he conversed. No one felt his superiority; every one found him on his own level. In visits to the sick at home, to the hospitals and wounded soldiers, he was indefatigable, nor was he a stranger to the Cambrai prisons. He went into the cottages of the poor, and spoke to them of God, and comforted them under the hardships which they suffered. If, when he visited them, they presented him with any refreshments in their unpretending and unpolished manner, he pleased them by seating himself at their humble table and partaking cheerfully and thankfully of what was set before him.

Various anecdotes illustrate his benevolence. In one of his rural excursions he met with a peasant in great affliction. Inquiring the cause, he was informed by the man that he had lost his cow, the only support of his indigent family. Fénelon attempted to comfort him, and gave him money to buy another. The peasant showed gratitude, but still was sad, grieving for the cow he had lost, to which he was much attached. Pursuing his walk, Fénelon found at a considerable distance from the place of the interview the very cow which was the object of so much affection. The sun had set, and the night was dark, but the good archbishop drove her back himself to the poor man's cottage.

In February, 1697, before Fénelon had perma-

nently left Versailles, news came that a fire had burned to the ground the archiepiscopal palace at Cambrai, and consumed many or all of his books and writings. His friend, the Abbé de Langeron, seeing Fénelon conversing at ease with a number of persons, supposed he had not heard these unpleasant tidings, and began with some formality and caution to inform him. But Fénelon, perceiving his solicitude, interrupted him by saying that he was fully acquainted with what had happened, adding further that, although the loss was a very great one, he would much rather they were burned than the cottage of a poor peasant. This has been adjudged a more touching and pious rejoinder than that of the literary man whose library was destroyed by fire and who replied to the tidings, "I should have profited little by my books if they had not taught me how to bear the loss of them." Fénelon was taught compassion for men and acceptance of the Divine will from a higher source than books. At his own expense he rebuilt the palace and furnished it in a suitable style of magnificence, but he did not allow the arms of his family to be affixed or painted on any part of it.

The archbishop's day was very carefully laid out, and has been quite minutely described. After the early rising, the private devotions, and the public services, he was visible until nine o'clock to those only who attended him by appointment. After that, till he dined, his doors were open to all persons who

had business with him. Noon was the hour for dinner. His table was suitable to his rank, handsomely dressed, with a great variety and abundance of good food, that his many guests might enjoy themselves, but he himself was extremely abstemious, eating only the simplest and lightest viands, and of them but sparingly. Contrary to the custom of most prelates, his chaplains, secretaries, attendants, and all officers of the household, sat with him at the same table, making a very harmonious household, among whom conversation was briskly carried on, Fénelon taking his part, but leaving every one full scope. After dinner all went to the great state bedchamber, which was very finely furnished, but was used mainly as a sitting-room, Fénelon himself sleeping in a little room adjoining, furnished simply with some gray woolen materials and only adorned with a few engravings. General conversation was continued in the large room; but a small table was placed before Fénelon, on which he signed his name to papers which required immediate dispatch, and took opportunity to give directions to his chaplains on the affairs of the diocese. He said grace both before and after dinner. He spent the evening with those that were in the house, whoever they might be, supping with the people who happened to be present. Supper was at nine. At ten the whole of the household assembled. One of his chaplains read the night prayers, and at the

end of them the archbishop rose and gave his general blessing to the company.

His chief amusement, when he found it necessary to relax a little from his arduous toils, was that of walking and riding. He loved rural scenes. "The country," he says in one of his letters, "delights me. In the midst of it I find God's holy peace." Everything seemed to him to be full of infinite goodness; and his heart glowed with purest happiness as he escaped from the business and cares which necessarily occupied so much of his time, into the air and the fields, into the flowers and sunshine, of the great Creator.

Many visitors came to him from far and near, attracted by his great reputation, and the results of the visits were always the same. Whatever the previous sentiments or opinions, or indifferent or hostile attitude, all were enchanted and moved to highest admiration. The Abbé le Dieu, Bossuet's secretary, and Canon of Meaux, in September, 1704, was a guest at the palace, and noted everything with the most minute and insatiable curiosity. He found himself treated with the utmost consideration, and given every opportunity to pry into all that interested him, and came away with none but words of hearty praise for all he saw.

A Scotchman, Andrew Ramsay, sometimes called the Chevalier de Ramsay, scion of an old Scotch family, exiled for his sympathy with the Stuarts, sickened by many aspects of the Protestant-

ism in which he had grown up, wandered over all Holland and Germany, hoping to find rest amid the philosophers of those countries, but finding it not. In this condition he came to Cambrai, where the archbishop received him with his wonted fatherly kindness, and speedily won his heart. The combination of spiritual religion and practical wisdom which he found in Fénelon, the height of his personal holiness, and the daily-watched beauty of his life, even more than the clear and helpful teachings received, made so deep an impression on him that he became a convert to the Roman Church, and, even when permitted to return to England, he remained faithful to the doctrines which he had learned at Cambrai. He continued there for many months, never wearying of studying his host's mind and soul, and eventually writing the first life of him ever published. His literary powers proved of great value in arranging the writings of his master and defending him from calumny. Subsequently Ramsay became teacher to some of the Pretender's family; and there is an interesting story on record telling how the friendship of Fénelon stood him in good stead at Oxford some years after, showing how in England the good archbishop's virtues attracted highest esteem and his name had more influence than even in France itself. In 1730 Ramsay came to England under a safe conduct, and was received as a member of the Royal Institution on the strength of his connection with the Archbishop

of Cambrai. He further desired to take the Doctor's Degree at Oxford. The Earl of Arran, then chancellor of the university, proposed him for that honor. Opposition arose in Convocation on the double ground that he was a Roman Catholic and had been a servant of the Pretender; but the opposition ceased when Dr. King, head of St. Mary's Hall, observed, "I present to you a pupil of the illustrious Fénelon, and this title is a sufficient guarantee to us." Ramsay was admitted to his degree by a vote of 85 to 17.

Another Britisher, the eccentric Earl of Peterboro, in whom the hero, skeptic, and profligate were mingled in about equal proportions, being among the visitors to Marlborough's headquarters in the Netherlands during the war, turned aside to Cambrai to make its master's acquaintance. He could have had very little sympathy with the saintly Mystic there, but he could no more resist his charm than could other men. He wrote subsequently to the philosopher, John Locke, that Fénelon "was cast in a particular mold that was never used for anybody else. He is a delicious creature, but I was forced to cut away from him as fast as I could, else he would have made me pious." He is also reported to have written while there, "On my word, I must quit this place as soon as possible, for if I stay here another week I shall be a Christian in spite of myself."

Count Munich, afterwards known as Marshal

Munich, one of the most distinguished commanders in the armies of Russia, when young was a lieutenant-colonel in the forces contending in Flanders. Being taken prisoner in battle and conducted to Cambrai, he was deeply affected by what he saw of the peaceful mind and truly Christian generosity of Fénelon. In all the vicissitudes of his after life, in court and camp, he delighted to the very end of his stormy career to remember the happy days which he passed as a prisoner or ward in the society of Fénelon. He found the recounting of the things he had witnessed at Cambrai a help in soothing the agitations of his own wild and turbulent spirit and a means of permanent instruction in righteousness.

The celebrated Cardinal Quirini, whose life was devoted to learned researches and useful studies, and who visited all parts of Europe in the prosecution of literary purposes, speaks in the following language of his interview with Fénelon: "I considered Cambrai as one of the principal objects of my travels in France. I will not hesitate to confess that it was toward this single spot, or rather towards the celebrated Fénelon, who resided there, that I was powerfully attracted. With what emotions of tenderness I still recall the gentle and affecting familiarity with which that great man deigned to discourse with me, and even sought my conversation; though his palace was then crowded with French generals and commanders-in-chief,

towards whom he displayed the most magnificent and generous hospitality. I have still fresh in my recollection all the serious and important subjects which were the topics of our discourse. My ear caught with eagerness every word that issued from his lips. The letters which he wrote me from time to time are still before me; letters which are an evidence alike of the wisdom of his principles and of the purity of his heart. I preserve them among my papers as the most precious treasure which I have in the world."

His enemies, we are told, practiced the shameful artifice of placing about him an ecclesiastic of high birth whom he considered only as one of his grand vicars, but who was to act as a spy upon him. The man who had consented to take so base an office had, however, the magnanimity to punish himself for it. Utterly subdued by the purity and gentleness of spirit that he witnessed in Fénelon, he threw himself at his feet and confessed the unworthy part he had been led to act, and withdrew from the world to conceal in retirement his grief and shame.

As will be inferred from these incidents his hospitality to those who came to him from all parts of Europe, as well as from near by, was unbounded. In spite of the urgency and multiplicity of his employments he was always ready, with the greatest kindness of feeling, to pay the utmost attention to all who had the slightest claim upon his time. He

did not hesitate to drop his eloquent pen, with which he conversed with all Europe, whenever Providence called him to listen to the awkward utterances of the most ignorant and degraded among his people. His practice and his preference was to suffer any personal inconvenience, or sacrifice any private interest, rather than injure the feelings of a fellow-man or omit an opportunity of usefulness. Writing to a friend about his daily routine he says: "I must confer with the Chapter on a lawsuit; I must write and dispatch letters; I must examine accounts. How dreary would be life made up of these perplexities and details but for the will of God which glorifies all He has given us to do!" This is the keynote on which Fénelon toned and tuned his life at Cambrai, making himself the servant of all, ministering rather than being ministered unto, glorying in the honor of such services, fearful of the outward pomps the Church conferred upon him, yet accepting them in all simplicity because he fully believed the Church to be directed by his Master.

"I have seen him," says the Chevalier Ramsay, "in the course of a single day, converse with the great and speak their language, ever maintaining the episcopal dignity; afterwards discourse with the simple and the little, like a good father instructing his children. This sudden transition from one extreme to the other, was without affectation or effort, like one who, by the extensiveness of his genius, reaches to all the most opposite distances.

I have often observed him at such conferences, and have as much admired the evangelical condescension by which he became all things to all men as the sublimity of his discourses. While he watched over his flock with a daily care, he prayed in the deep retirement of internal solitude. The many things which were generally admired in him were nothing in comparison of that divine life by which he walked with God like Enoch, and was unknown to men."

The Abbé Galet, another of Fénelon's contemporaries, bears loud witness to the fact that, however grand the outside accommodations were, the archbishop's personal appointments were of the most modest description. He says that "in the meager simplicity of his private living rooms, fitted up plainly in serge, of his dress—a long velvet cassock trimmed with scarlet, but without gold tassels or lace—even of his ecclesiastical vestments, Fénelon did homage to that idea of holy poverty whose actual practice was forbidden by his station in the world."

But when it came to others, Fénelon was very considerate and very generous. When he had cause to send his chaplains into the country on any business of the diocese, it was always in one of his own carriages and with one of his own attendants, that the respect which he showed them might conciliate to them the general respect of his flock. He took, so far as possible, the burdens of his clergy on him-

self, offered to pay more tax than he needed to, even wasted (as it would now seem) money on beggars whose appearance moved his sympathies. Yet he also practiced sound economy, that he might have the more to give, held a careful audit of his household accounts, and set aside large portions of his income for the starving soldiers, or the interests of his seminary, or the education of his nephews and their maintenance in the army. He educated great numbers of students at his own expense, sending them to Paris; especially the young men that were likely to prove good priests, but were too poor to bear the financial burden. He had always a whole string of his nephews and grandnephews or other relatives gathered about him, young people whose education he was asked to take charge of or those whose interests, for friends' or relationship's sake, he was desirous to promote. He was never without the presence of children in the palace. A suite of rooms above his own was reserved for them. Not only his relatives, but the sons of his intimate friends, were placed in his care, that he might train them to be good and chivalrous gentlemen. Very few of these boys were intended for the priesthood, but the confidence that Fénelon inspired was so great that it was believed a child reared under his eye would be better fitted for court or camp than if he spent his early years in the company of princes at St. Germain or Versailles. The last of his little guests were the grandchildren of

his friend, De Chevreuse, and, harassed though he was by national disasters, he could spare time to study and report upon them and express his pleasure in their company. He wrote of the children, "I delight to have them here; I love them dearly; they cheer me much; they do not trouble me in any way." They were with him to the end; so that from the day he entered on his duties at Versailles until his death he may be said to have given a definite proportion of his time and energy to the practical demonstration of his excellent theories of education.

During the contest for the Spanish succession, in the early years of the eighteenth century, between France and Bavaria on the one side, and England, Holland, and Austria on the other, the diocese of Cambrai, not far from the Netherlands, which has sometimes been denominated the battle-field of Europe, was within the realm of war, and suffered much from the cruel ravages of the advancing and retreating armies. Under these circumstances, Fénelon continued his constant visitations to every part of the district, and all the writers dwell upon the singular marks of homage paid on these occasions to his eminent virtue by people of every name. So far from putting any obstacle in his way, the English, Germans, and Dutch took every means of showing their admiration and veneration for the archbishop. All distinctions of religion and sect, all those feelings of hatred or jealousy which divide nations, disappeared in his presence. He was

often obliged to resort to artifice to avoid the honors which the armies of the enemy intended him. He refused the military escorts which were offered him for his personal security in the exercise of his functions, and, with no other attendants than a few ecclesiastics, he traversed the countries desolated by war. His way was marked by his alms and benefactions, and by a suspending of the calamities which armies bring. In these short intervals the people breathed in peace, so that his pastoral visits might be termed a truce of God. The Duke of Marlborough, the Prince of Orange, the Duke of Ormond, the distinguished commanders who were opposed to France, embraced every opportunity of showing their esteem. They sent detachments of their men to guard his meadows and his corn; they caused his grain to be transported with a convoy to Cambrai, lest it should be seized and carried off by their own foragers. St. Simon, by no means his friend, can not say enough in panegyric for his never-ending kindness to the troops brought through Cambrai during the war. The duke paints him as moving among the sick and the whole, the known and the unknown, the officers and the common soldiers, with a knowledge of the world which understood how to gain them all by treating each in his due degree, and yet a true and cheerful shepherd of their souls, as constant in his ministration to the humblest as though he had no other business in life. And he was no less careful for their bodily

comfort; lodged officers innumerable in his palace; hired other houses besides for the same purpose; filled them with the sick and wounded, and with poor people driven from the neighboring villages; tended the sick with his own hands, sometimes for many months, until their entire recovery; supplied the hospitals with costly drugs and endless streams of food and delicacies, sent out, for all their abundance, in such perfect order that every patient had exactly what he needed. He was on the best of terms with the nobles and government officials, not only of his diocese but of all Flanders, even as far as Brussels, and used his influence with them to beg many temporal favors for his people; got his village schoolmasters exempted from service in the army, saved the farmers and their horses from forced labors in the winter, and even warned the Ministry at Paris that the devastated country could be the theater of no more campaigns. When the commisariat of the king was in extreme want of corn, the archbishop emptied his immense granaries for their subsistence, and absolutely refused all compensation. He said, "The king owes me nothing, and in times of calamity it is my duty as a citizen and a bishop to give back to the State what I have received from it." It was thus he avenged himself for his disgrace. At another critical moment, only a timely advance from his own purse prevented the garrison of St. Omer from going over in a body to the enemy, as other unpaid regiments

had done. It is no wonder that he became the idol of the troops, who sang his praises even in the antechambers of Versailles. And his fame stood equally high with those who were fighting against the king.

He was loved by so many because he was himself so full of love. An instance of his largeness both of mind and heart occurred during these closing years, which deserves to be recorded, for it certainly does not stand alone. The English prince known as the Old Pretender was an officer in the French army in 1709, and his duty took him near to Cambrai. In the conversations which passed between them, the archbishop recommended to him very emphatically never to compel his subjects to change their religion. "Liberty of thought," said he, "is an impregnable fortress which no human power can force. Violence can never convince; it only makes hypocrites. When kings take it upon them to direct in matters of religion instead of protecting it, they bring it into bondage. You ought therefore to grant to all a legal toleration; not as approving everything indifferently, but as suffering with patience what God suffers; endeavoring in a proper manner to restore such as are misled, but never by any measures but those of gentle and benevolent persuasion."

Even against the Jansenists, who were fierce Augustinians, the ultra Calvinists of that time in the matter of the Divine decrees, and whom he thoroughly disliked, being himself a firm friend of free

will, he would by no means have harsh measures taken. The sweetness of his disposition and his idea of the meekness of God, made him strongly averse to the doctrines of Quesnel and Jansen, which he considered as leading to despair. "God," he said, "is to them only a terrible Being; to me He is a Being good and just. I can not consent to make Him a tyrant who binds us with fetters, and then commands us to walk, and punishes us if we do not." In this he was at one with John Wesley. But he would not, any more than the Methodist, permit persecution of them in his diocese. "Let us," said he, "be to them what they are unwilling that God should be to man, full of compassion and indulgence." He was told that the Jansenists were his declared enemies, that they left nothing undone to bring him and his doctrine into discredit. "That is one further reason," said he, "for me to suffer and forgive them."

On hearing that some peasants in Hainaut, who were descended from Protestants, and who held still the same opinions, had received the sacrament from a minister of their own persuasion, but that, when discovered, they disguised their sentiments and even went to mass, he said to the Reformed minister: "Brother, you see what has happened. It is full time that these good people should have some fixed religion; go and obtain their names, and those of all their families; I give you my word that in less than six months they shall all have passports"—

that is, to go where they like. The same clergyman, whose name was Brunice, he received at his table as a brother, and treated him with great kindness.

To an officer of the army who consulted him to know what course he should adopt with such of his soldiers as were Huguenots, Fénelon answered: "Tormenting and teasing heretic soldiers into conversion, will answer no end; it will not succeed; it will only produce hypocrites. The converts so made will desert in crowds."

The closing years of Fénelon's life were inexpressibly saddened by the number of deaths that swept away in melancholy succession nearly all with whom his heartstrings were most closely intertwined. The first to go was his very dear friend Langeron, who died at Cambrai, November 10, 1710. He probably held a deeper measure of his love than any one else, possessed his entire confidence, which was never in the least degree shaken by mutual disagreement and reproof. He chose him for a coadjutor on the mission to Saintonge, shared with him the loving care of the little prince, to whom he was reader, kept him with him at Cambrai as one of his chief assistants and a principal amelioration of the bonds which tied him there. Three days after the death he wrote: "I have lost the greatest comfort of my life, and the best laborer God has given me in the service of His Church, a friend who has been my delight for thirty-four years. O, how full of sorrow life is! O God, how

much our best friends cost us! The only solace of life is friendship, and friendship turns into irreparable grief. Let us seek the Friend who does not die, in whom we shall recover all the rest. Nothing could be deeper or truer than the virtues of him who has died. Nothing could be a greater witness of grace than was his death. I have never seen anything more lovely and edifying. . . . God's will is done. He chose to seek my friend's happiness rather than my comfort; and I should be wanting alike to God and my friend, if I did not will what He wills. In the sharpest moment of my grief I offered up him I so dreaded to lose."

Still keener, in some respects, was the loss he experienced in the death of the Duke of Burgundy, who passed away February 18, 1712. The ties between them were of the closest description, and the long separation of fifteen years had made no difference in their mutual affection. When the young man—fifteen years old at the time of Fénelon's banishment in 1697—heard of the sad event, he ran to his grandfather and flung himself at his feet, and implored with tears his clemency, and as a proof of Fénelon's doctrine appealed to the change in his own conduct and character. Louis was deeply affected, but said that what he solicited was not a matter of favor; it concerned the purity of the Church, of which Bossuet was the best judge. All intercourse between the two was interdicted, and as both were closely watched by spies, it was four

years before the slightest communication could pass between them. Then the duke contrived to send a letter in which he declared his unshaken love, saying that indeed his friendship but increased with time, and that he was proceeding more steadily than before in the path of virtue. When, in 1702, Louis gave the Duke of Burgundy command of the army in Flanders, he petitioned with great earnestness that he might be allowed in his passage to the army to see Fénelon. The king consented only on condition that the interview should be in public. They met at a public dinner, where, of course, but little could be said, as everything was closely watched. But the duke in a loud voice exclaimed, in the hearing of all present, "I am sensible, my Lord Archbishop, what I owe to you, and you know what I am." Fénelon writes concerning the interview as follows: "I have seen the Duke of Burgundy after five years' separation, but God seasoned the consolation with great bitterness. I saw him only in public for a short quarter of an hour. One must take things as they come and give one's self up unreservedly to God's providence." After this, there was opportunity for a more frequent correspondence, and it is most creditable to both parties, filled with affection and profoundest deference on the part of the younger man, and with the deepest solicitude and wisest counsels on the part of the elder.

The duke's father, the dauphin, or heir apparent,

died in April, 1711, leaving, of course, his son as next in the succession to the throne. Then, indeed, did Fénelon's hopes and the hopes of the nation rise high. Cambrai became thronged with people who thought it well to be in the good graces of one who might very soon be the power behind the throne and the most important man in France. But alas! alas for human plans and prospects! The dauphine, Burgundy's wife, died February 12th, of a strange malady which baffled all the physicians; then the duke himself, having caught the infection, died February 18th, and their eldest son succumbed to the same complaint, March 18th. The royal household was overwhelmed, the nation was stunned, and no one felt the loss more than, probably no one as much as, Fénelon. He writes: "I am struck down with grief; the shock has made me ill without any malady. My health has suffered terribly, and whatever revives my grief brings on a certain amount of feverish agitation. I am humbled by my weakness. All my links are broken; there is nothing left to bind me to earth; but the ties which bind me to heaven are strengthened. O, what suffering this true friendship breeds! But if I could restore him to life by turning a straw I would not do it, for it is God's will." It was undoubtedly the darkest hour of his days. He never wholly rallied from the blow, or took the same interest in his labors that he did before. But there is the best of evidence that his faith in God did not fail, and that in all the suffer-

ing, both for himself and for his country, around which the gloomiest shadows seemed now to be gathering, he had no thought of the Almighty unworthy of his goodness.

In November, 1712, died another most dearly loved and life-long friend, the Duke of Chevreuse, opening up all his wounds afresh, as he says; but he adds, "God be praised, be it ours to adore his impenetrable purposes!" In August, 1714, Fénelon lost the last of that special group who had stuck to him more closely than brothers, the Duke de Beauvilliers. They had never met since he left Versailles, but their hearts were most closely knit. "Our best friends," he wrote, "are the source of our greatest sorrow and bitterness. One is tempted to say that all good friends should wait and die on the same day. Friendship will be the cause of my death."

It was to be even so. His frame was feeble, and these fierce attacks affected him severely. In the following November a carriage accident entailed another shock to his system, from which he had not strength to recover. In the month that followed, his friends recognized that he was failing visibly. On the first of January he was attacked by a sharp fever, and it began to be evident that the end was near. For the whole of the six days that remained to him on earth he permitted only the reading of the Holy Scriptures. Over and over they read to him 2 Cor. iv and v, especially the part about the

"building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "Repeat that again," he said more than once. Other texts of Scripture particularly suited to his condition were read to him again and again. He would try to repeat them himself with a failing voice, while his eyes and his whole countenance were lighted up with a bright expression of faith and love which the sacred words inspired. Several times he asked those around to repeat St. Martin's dying words, "Lord, if I am yet necessary to Thy people I refuse not labor; Thy will be done."

On the morning of the 4th he took the blessed sacrament, being carried into the large state bedchamber for the purpose, and gathering about him his attendants, to whom he spoke a few farewell words of tender exhortation. On the 6th he received extreme unction, as one about to depart. And immediately after, bidding every one, save his chaplain, leave the room, summoning all his strength, he dictated to him a few lines addressed to Père Lachaise, the king's confessor. Being thus about to appear before God, he said: "I have never felt aught save docility to the Church and abhorrence of the novelties attributed to me. I accepted the condemnation of my book with the most absolute unreserve. There never was a moment in my life when I did not entertain the liveliest gratitude and most honest zeal for the king's person, as also the most inviolable respect and attachment. I wish

long life for His Majesty, of whom both Church and State have so great need. If it be permitted me to come before the presence of God, I will continually ask this of Him." He makes in the letter two requests of the king, neither of them for himself or his family: First, that he will appoint to Cambrai a pious, worthy, orthodox prelate; and secondly, that he will allow the Cambrai seminary to be intrusted to the Sulpician Fathers to whom he owed so much. The rest of that day and the night following he had much agony, and, in a feeble, broken voice, said many times, "Thy will, not mine." He was surrounded by those who loved him best, his two favorite nephews, the Abbé de Beaumont and the Marquis de Fénelon, arriving in haste from Paris. He gave them all his blessing as long as he could speak. He passed away peacefully, amid the tears of all around, at quarter past five in the morning; aged sixty-three years, five months, and one day.

He was buried in the cathedral of Cambrai, with every tribute of honor and respect, but with all simplicity and without ostentation, as he himself directed. In his will, dated May 5, 1705, he wrote, after declaring that he cherished no thought concerning those who had attacked him save those of prayer and brotherly love: "I wish my burial to be in the metropolitical church at Cambrai, as simple as may be, and with the least possible expenditure. This is not a mere conventional expression of humil-

ity, but because I think the money laid out on funerals other than simple had better be kept for more useful purposes; and also I think the modesty of a bishop's funeral should set the example to the laity and lead them to diminish useless outlay in their burial arrangements." The last clause says: "While I love my family deeply, and am aware of the needy state of their affairs, I do not think it right to leave anything to them. Ecclesiastical property is not meant to support family wants, and should not pass out of the hands of those who minister in the Church." It was found, when his affairs were settled up, that after administering for twenty years the great income of his office, which was at his own absolute disposal, he ended a life of persistent and rigorous self-denial with no money in his coffers, and no debts to any man. His public and private life had been ruled by the fundamental principle which he did not fear to proclaim again and again as his conception of truest patriotism: "I love my family better than myself; I love my country better than my family; I love the human race better than my country." All his days declared, also, that he loved God best of all.

He stood for union with the Divine. He lived ever in the eye of the All-Searcher. All his thoughts and actions had been ruled by the purpose to be perfectly pleasing unto Him. He had, no doubt, failed at some points. He was ever ready to confess it, and lament his weaknesses; for he was

human. But not many of mortal frame ever kept more steadily before them from youth to age the high endeavor to be as much as possible like Christ. Neither disgrace nor disappointment daunted him. The failure of earthly ambitions only impressed on him the more that he had a message for mankind that was above such things. And though there were probably not many in his generation that were ready to receive his lofty words, though there are even now not many who are prepared to accept fully his sublime teachings and follow him as he followed the Master, yet there will always be an inward witness in the hearts of some of every age that responds to such voices, and leaps with joy at the summons to put everything away, that God may take full possession of His own. He was absorbed in the hot pursuit of highest holiness. On this his strength was concentrated. Only thus did he attain the success that was vouchsafed him. The spiritual life was to him the only real life. The Presence Divine was ever with him. The Spirit of God filled his heart.

During the outrages of the French Revolution, in 1793, when the graves of the dead were being brutally violated by order of the government with wanton cruelty and savage merriment, and the bodies of the great and noble, the learned and pious, were being scattered to the four winds, an order from government reached Cambrai directing that all the leaden coffins that were there be sent to the

arsenal at Douay to be converted into instruments of warfare. The agents proceeded to the Metropolitan Cathedral, entered the vault under the altar, took away the bodies of others, but left the remains of Fénelon; not designedly, it would seem, for they had no veneration for the talents and virtues of the illustrious prelate; not accidentally, for what men call chance is only the providence of God. It was the counsel of unerring wisdom that issued the commission, "Touch not mine anointed and do my prophet no harm." There are official documents describing the finding of the body afterwards by the mayor of Cambrai. The remains, in a fair state of preservation, were reverently sealed up and replaced in the vault. In 1800 the Emperor Napoleon ordered that "a monument or mausoleum be erected to receive the ashes of the immortal Fénelon;" to which they were to be transferred in due time. This was probably not carried out, as the existing monument to Fénelon is in the new cathedral of the date of 1825. But his chief monument is in the hearts of men, in the veneration and affection felt for him by the whole of Christ's Church without distinction of name, and in the gratitude of the many, many souls who have been helped on their heavenward journey by his strong, wise words and beautiful example.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SPIRITUAL LETTERS.

It is fitting that we conclude this sketch of Fénelon with some account of his writings, because it is so largely through them that he lives today. The most complete collection of his works, issued from Paris between 1820 and 1830, is in thirty-four volumes, 8vo, of which eleven volumes are given to the correspondence. Many of these literary labors have been translated into English; for instance, the treatise on the "Education of Daughters," the "Dialogues on Eloquence," the "Demonstration of the Existence of God," and the "Spiritual Letters." The last has by far the greatest importance at the present time, has indeed an importance for all time. But before taking it up, a few words concerning some of his other productions will be in place.

While he was superior at the institution for the New Catholics, in 1687 or 1688, he wrote a treatise on the authority of the priesthood or the dogma of the Apostolical Succession, of course defending it; which established his reputation as a writer, and attracted the notice of the king. Much more important was his work on the "Education of Girls;"

this has been sufficiently dwelt upon in the first chapter. A treatise on the "Existence of God" was begun in these earlier years, but leisure did not seem to be found for its full development. Even the first part was not published till 1712, and the second did not see the light until three years after his death. It is of little value now, but it made a strong impression on the metaphysical philosophers of the eighteenth century, and is especially praised by Thomas Reid. His "Dialogues on Eloquence," with special reference to that of the pulpit (an admirable treatise on oratory), was not published at all until after his death; neither was his "Refutation of Malebranche," his "Letters to the King," treatise on the "Authority of the Sovereign Pontiff," "Questions for Self-Examination on the Duties of a King," "Letters on Religion" to the Duke of Orleans, "Plans of Government," and "Letter to the Academy." The latter, written a few months before his death, constitutes his answer to the chief literary questions of his age, and treats more especially of the controversy between the Classic and Romantic Schools. He was a thoroughgoing Classicist, an Ancient of the Ancients, insisting on the study of Greek as a panacea for most literary diseases. He has also in the letter a chapter on the "Art of Writing History," making symmetry the first requirement, and impartiality next. In his eyes a history was a work of art, with something in it of the epic poem. He suggested, furthermore, that

the Academy should devote itself to a detailed examination of the standard works in the French language, and prepare popular editions with notes.

All Fénelon's writings, it may be said, show much grandeur and delicacy of sentiment, great fertility of genius, a correct taste, and excited sensibility. A poetical character appears in them all. By assiduous study the works of the best writers of antiquity were familiar to him, and his intimate acquaintance with their productions furnished him a resource in every vicissitude of life; they were his ornament in prosperity, his comfort in adversity. The charm of his manner in society is largely communicated to the products of his pen. They abound in passages of splendor and pathos, but their chief excellence is in their tender simplicity, by which the reader's heart is irresistibly drawn to the writer.

Of much higher rank in a literary point of view than any of those previously mentioned was his "Adventures of Telemachus; or, The Education of a Prince." It is a fabulous narrative in the form of a heroic poem, in which he sets down the truths most necessary to be known by one about to reign; and the faults that cling most closely to sovereign power are also fully described. It was composed by Fénelon while he was preceptor to the royal dukes, and designed exclusively for their instruction; "written at chance moments, hurriedly, and piece by piece," says the author, "sent to the press by an unfaithful copyist, and never intended for the

world." He insisted that he did not borrow from real persons, or sketch in the characters of his own time. This was undoubtedly true; but no human power could convince Louis XIV that it was so, and the unauthorized publication of it in 1698, just when the Quietist controversy was at its height, was extremely unfortunate for Fénelon, and filled the king's cup of wrath to overflowing. He had been more than sufficiently embittered before, but after this there was not the slightest hope of reconciliation; for the book is an idealistic portrayal of a commonwealth where virtue has its own again, where there is no tyranny, where the king is the father of all his people and the chief servant of the State, where duty is lifted far above rights, and justice is supreme. Since nothing could be more opposite to all this than the character and conduct of King Louis, it is no wonder that he took it as a personal insult and a deliberate satire. In every part of it disrespectful mention is made of ambition, of extensive conquests, of military fame, of magnificence, and of almost everything else which Louis considered as the glory of his reign. While the author must be acquitted of any intention to affront the monarch, which would have been most ungrateful and most ridiculous, it is evident that he must have had unconsciously in mind the principal actors in the scenes around him, was wholly out of sympathy with them, and was training the young princes on a totally different model. The

book, suppressed, of course, in Paris, was brought out at once in Holland, and became everywhere the rage, immensely popular all over Europe, and, even to the present day, much read. It has stood the test of two centuries of existence, has been translated into many languages, and has made his name familiar to those whom he could not otherwise have touched. Nevertheless, the effect of its publication on his fortunes at that time was exceedingly disastrous, and his enemies made the utmost use of it against him.

"The Explanation of the Maxims of the Saints on the Interior Life," and the great part it played in Fénelon's career has been already referred to in a previous chapter. The reader will enjoy getting a little fuller idea of its contents. Dr. T. C. Upham devoted forty-five pages to summarizing, in a free translation, the forty-five articles constituting the book, and the following extracts are taken from his work, now out of print:

"Pure love is mixed love carried to its true result. When this result is attained, the motive of God's glory so expands itself, and so fills the mind, that the other motive, that of our own happiness, becomes so small and so recedes from our inward notice as to be *practically* annihilated. It is then that God becomes what He ever ought to be,—the center of the soul, to which all its affections tend; the great moral sun of the soul, from which all its light and all its warmth proceed. It is then that a man thinks

no more of himself. He has become the man of a single eye. His own happiness and all that regards himself are entirely lost sight of, in his simple and fixed look to God's will and God's glory."

"When the sun shines the stars disappear. When God is in the soul, who can think of himself? So that we love God and God alone; and all other things *in* and *for* God."

"The second state, which follows that of holy resignation, is that of holy *indifference*. Such a soul not only desires and wills in submission, but absolutely ceases either to desire or to will, except in co-operation with the Divine leading. Its desires for itself, as it has greater light, are more completely and permanently merged in the one higher and more absorbing desire of God's glory, and the fulfillment of His will. It desires and wills, therefore, only what God desires and wills."

"Holy indifference is not inactivity. It is the furthest possible from it. It is indifference to anything and everything out of God's will; but it is the highest life and activity to everything in that will."

"One of the principles in the doctrine of holy living is, that we should not be premature in drawing the conclusion that the process of inward crucifixion is complete, and that our abandonment to God is without any reservation whatever. The act of consecration, which is a sort of incipient step, may be sincere; but the reality of the consecration in the full extent to which we suppose it to exist, and

which may properly be described as abandonment or entire self-renunciation, can be known only when God has applied the appropriate tests. We can not know whether we have renounced ourselves, except by being tried on those very points to which our self-renunciation relates. The trial will show whether or not we are wholly the Lord's. Those who prematurely draw the conclusion that they are so, expose themselves to great illusion and injury."

"Those in the highest state of religious experience desire nothing except that God may be glorified in them by the accomplishment of His holy will."

"Their continual life of love, which refers everything to God, and identifies everything with His will, is essentially a life of continual prayer."

"The will of God is their ultimate and only rule of action."

"The most advanced souls are those which are most possessed with the thoughts and the presence of Christ."

"The soul in the state of pure love acts in simplicity. Its inward rule of action is found in the decisions of a sanctified judgment. These decisions, based upon judgments that are free from self-interest, may not always be *absolutely* right, because our views and judgments, being limited, can extend only to things in part; but they may be said to be *relatively* right; they conform to things so far as we are permitted to see them and understand them, and convey to the soul a moral assurance that, when we

act in accordance with them, we are doing as God would have us do."

We come now to the "Spiritual Letters," which have been called, not unadvisedly, "the most perfect things of their kind anywhere to be found." They were written to a very large number of correspondents, both men and women, on the impulse of the moment, and without the least thought of publication. Hence they become all the more the most authentic revelation of his inmost mind, a necessary and integral part of his character. He wrote as he would have spoken, suiting himself to the knowledge of his hearers, aiming at simplicity rather than ornament, but not disdaining homely similes so far as they will make his meaning plain. He draws freely and constantly upon his own experience, so that the letters are a reflection of himself, as well as a storehouse of practical religion. Helpful counsel may be found in them for nearly all situations in life and on nearly all topics that are most closely connected with Christian living. For though the persons to whom he wrote were usually in the higher circles—dukes, counts, lords, ladies, soldiers, courtiers, and priests—nevertheless, they were always men and women, wives and mothers, with human hearts and much the same temptations to combat that come to common people in the present age. The letters were written to meet the individual needs of very real persons, written out of a warm heart and by a mind stored with the

lore of the Church on these subjects, as well as gifted with unusual powers of discernment. Fénelon was a consummate director of consciences; he moved through life heavily incumbered with the wants of others, carrying many burdens and taxing all his great powers to meet the ever-recurring needs of a multitude of perplexed and hungering spirits.

Those who peruse the epistles will readily perceive that they present a very high ideal, yet we do not think they can fairly be pronounced harsh. He does not speak in a tone of asperity. He saw far into the human heart, looked with a piercing eye through the disguises of sin, could follow with unexampled clearness the turnings and twistings and lurkings of selfishness. Though the severest of censors, he is at the same time the most pitying. He regards human error with indulgent tenderness, and weeps over it as Jesus wept over Jerusalem. Echoes of the Stoic philosophers—Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, Seneca—will undoubtedly be found in these letters. Indeed, a very considerable and rather curious parallel has been drawn between Fénelon and Seneca; which only shows the permanence of the principles that regulate the union between God and the soul under all skies and creeds. There is a close similarity between these letters and those of Francis of Sales, who wrote on the same themes; for the two saw eye to eye. The effusions of either Francis, although adapted primarily to a different

communion and time, can be recommended almost unqualifiedly to-day to that small class—it will always be a small class—who set themselves, with an aroused intelligence, a high appreciation of the nature of the task before them, and an intense determination, to realize, through all available and appointed means, the closest possible approximation to perfect union with the Divine.

Our criticisms of Fénelon's letters are but few, and yet a little note of warning should undoubtedly be sounded. No one should read them who is not prepared to think for himself, to use a vigorous common-sense, and to select for entire observance only those precepts which commend themselves to his mind as being in complete accord with the Scripture and with the most judicious of other spiritual advisers. Almost everything he finds will, we believe, thus commend itself. But there will be an occasional use of language before which he will pause and make a note of question or dissent. There will be unguarded expressions which need explanation. Perhaps the chief words which he will find cause to challenge will be those of most frequent occurrence—self and self-love. Fénelon does not use these terms quite accurately, and whoever takes them literally will be led into trouble. Where he says self-love he almost always means selfishness, which, in our modern nomenclature, is quite a different thing, being the inordinate, excessive, or forbidden love of self, such a regard for the interests

and rights of self as disregards the interests and rights of other people. This latter is always wrong, of course. But self-love, strictly speaking, is in itself right, perfectly innocent, and of great importance to retain. It is essential to our preservation and prosperity, one of the most vital ingredients in our constitution. Fénelon, we think, never recognizes this meaning of the word, never seems to know that we have very important, imperative duties to self, as well as to our neighbor and to God. Either he was not familiar with these distinctions so common in ethics now, or he was so profoundly impressed with the danger of overdoing self-love that he did not deem it well to recognize this duty at all. But that surely is a mistake, and with some minds tends to become a very harmful one, leading straight on to fanaticism.

He is never tired of insisting on the absolute necessity for the death of self, the destruction of self. But this phrase will not stand critical examination. The peril which always lurks in figures of speech, and the tendency to exaggerate which so frequently besets devotional writers of the intense mystic type, is very manifest here. Such writers put forward their extreme statements with a laudable desire to make a deep impression on the callous sensibilities of the average reader, and with the idea, perhaps, that large deduction will be made in the practical application of their precepts. But many find in this an excuse for throwing the whole sub-

ject impatiently aside. We are convinced that it is better in such things to state the exact truth with all carefulness and with as few misleading figures of speech as possible. There is certainly an ethical limit to our right of self-abnegation and self-impartation. Benevolence has its moral bounds in holiness. A man's life finds its largest fulfillment, not in weakly assimilating itself to the wishes of those around it, but in giving forth some new and characteristic expression of the life of God. The notions, or even the needs, of one's neighbors are not the highest standard of right living. Every man holds himself in trust for his Creator, and must do his best to manifest that Creator, not necessarily according to the conception most prevalent in his immediate circle, but according to the mandate which has been laid on him. It is this thought which gives the profoundest value to his existence and lifts him above too great dependence on popular standards. And it is this thought, properly carried out, which shows how much of unreason there is in the declaration that self must be totally forgotten, renounced, annihilated.

No person is justified in doing anything of this sort. Self-preservation and self-protection, self-respect and self-esteem, self-defense and self-development are manifest duties. It may readily be granted that they are not in any great danger of neglect from the ordinary or average individual. But the extraordinary individual, if wrongly in-

structed, filled with a zeal not according to knowledge, keenly conscientious, morbidly scrupulous, keyed up to an unnatural pitch and straining after an impossible ideal, may do himself much harm and go far astray. To overdo is often as bad as to underdo, and causes undoing.

Denunciations of selfishness are always in order, but its boundaries are not so easily defined. Self-love—the instinctive desire or tendency that leads one to seek to promote his own well-being, a due care for one's own happiness, essential to high endeavor and perfectly compatible with justice, generosity, and benevolence—is a component part of our nature, and must be carefully safeguarded. To talk about its annihilation or eradication is to talk foolishness; and to attempt such eradication is to fly in the face of nature; that is, of God. The whole question, then, between selfishness and self-love is one of degree and adjustment and relative rights. No absolute hard-and-fast line can be drawn. One must use his best judgment, enlightened from all possible sources, as to what in any given case duty to self and duty to others demands. And that judgment he must follow, even when it materially differs from the opinion of those who may criticise his conduct. There is no virtue in wasting one's self on impossible tasks. Self-sacrifice is never ethical if it be a willful spending of self to no purpose. One may do a serious wrong to himself, and confer no real good on any one else, by following the lead

of generous, uncalculating, unthinking impulses. The exhortation never to think about one's self is thoroughly mischievous, and can only lead to fanaticism and discouragement.

Self-control, not self-annihilation or extirpation, is the duty of the Christian. A man has perfect self-control when his highest powers hold the lower in subjection with perfect ease, and are themselves in complete harmony with the will of God. He is perfectly free from selfishness who gives to self only that degree of attention and care which is due, and in no way infringes on any of the rights of others. And he who is keenly desirous of doing this, bearing in mind his natural bias the wrong way, will deem it the safer course to go a little beyond what may seem the due limit. But it is not selfish to be manly, or to insist on being permitted to work out one's calling according to the clear, conscious summons from on high. Self-will so much inveighed against is right, since it is a necessary component part of selfhood. Without self-will and self-consciousness there can be no self; in other words, we cease to be, and are non-existent. Masterfulness should be distinguished from willfulness; the former is not sinful, but a most desirable thing in this world where leadership is so essential to progress. A selfish will, one at any point divergent from the will of God, so far as we know or can ascertain, is always wrong. To tell where egoism ends and altruism begins in our relations with our fellow-men is far from

easy; but it is ever blessed to become absorbed in a great cause, and supremely noble to have as the highest object in life the glory of God.

Some exceptions must be taken to a few other extreme statements of Fénelon, in which he follows other mistaken writers. The language of such teachers on humility is overstrained and really false, likely to do harm. Fénelon says, for example: "Those who are truly humble always take the lowest place, rejoicing when they are despised, and considering every one superior to themselves. We may judge of the advancement we have in humility by the delight we have in humiliation and contempt." His motto was, "Ama nesciri"—Love to be unknown. Kempis wrote much of this same sort. And John Fletcher of Madeley was constantly offering up the prayer which we have in Charles Wesley's couplet,

> "Make me little and unknown,
> Loved and prized by God alone."

To desire to be despised, thought meanly of, accounted as naught, we can not recognize as a fruit of grace in a healthy mind rightly apprehensive of the vast importance to usefulness of a good reputation. To think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think is wrong, but so is it wrong to think of ourselves less highly than we ought. The truth above all things, facts at any cost whether to ourselves or other people, is the better attitude. No

gain can come from falsity on the one side, any more than on the other. To delight unspeakably in the will of God, even when it involves contempt from those who misunderstand our position, is not the same as delighting in contempt itself. To insist on the lowest place when our recognized and lawful place is higher, would be neither wise nor edifying. Fénelon himself took his proper place as archbishop in the cathedral and palace and elsewhere, without diminution from his humility. He showed the latter in his hospital work, and in his familiar relations with those of lower rank.

A little too much is made in some places of the importance of silence. There is not sufficient recognition of the fact that some are in great danger of speaking too little, that there are idle silences as well as idle words. The stress laid upon listening to the interior voice is also carried somewhat beyond bounds, and needs counterbalancing by the warning that it is very easy to mistake the utterances of our own spirits for those of the Spirit of God, the products of a vain imagination for the products of Divine direction. Many have been sadly misled at this point. We need not perhaps specify other strained and unbalanced remarks. There are not many of them, and it would be unjust to make too much of them; but it is also unsafe to ignore them altogether. The letters are all the better in that they demand reflection from the reader, and are not to be taken up in a wooden way as though

they were infallible. Properly perused, with prayer and meditation, they can not fail to be of immense service to the inquiring mind and the devotional spirit. There is nothing better as a stimulus to those with lofty aspirations seeking for guidance as to how best they may reach the heights.

A few extracts from the letters, all that our space permits, are furnished, that the reader's appetite may be whetted for the feast to be found in larger volumes. And we can not better close this unpretentious, but we hope useful, little book than with some of the glowing paragraphs that have already done so much good in the world, and are destined to do so much more as the centuries roll:

EASY WAYS OF DIVINE LOVE.

Christian perfection is not that rigorous, tedious, cramping thing that many imagine. It demands only an entire surrender of everything to God, from the depths of the soul; and the moment this takes place, whatever is done for Him becomes easy. They who are God's without reserve are in every state content; for they will only what He wills, and desire to do for Him whatever He desires them to do. They strip themselves of everything, and in this nakedness find all things a hundred-fold. Peace of conscience, liberty of spirit, the sweet abandonment of themselves and theirs into the hands of God, the joy of perceiving the light always increasing in their hearts, and, finally, the freedom of their

souls from the bondage of the fears and desires of this world,—these things constitute that return of happiness which the true children of God receive a hundred-fold in the midst of their crosses while they remain faithful.

What God requires of us is a will which is no longer divided between Him and any creature; a simple pliable state of will, which desires what He desires, rejects nothing but what He rejects, wills without reserve what He wills, and under no pretext wills what He does not. In this state of mind all things are proper for us; our amusements, even, are acceptable in His sight.

No matter what crosses may overwhelm the true child of God, he wills everything that happens, and would not have anything removed that his Father appoints; the more he loves God, the more is he filled with content; and the most stringent perfection, far from being a burden, only renders his yoke the lighter.

THE DIVINE PRESENCE.

The true source of all our perfection is contained in the command of God to Abraham, "Walk before me and be thou perfect." (Gen. xvii, 1.) The presence of God calms the soul, and gives it quiet and repose, even during the day and in the midst of occupation; but we must be given up to God without reserve.

Whenever we perceive within us anxious desires

for anything, whatever it may be, and find that nature is hurrying us with too much haste to do whatever is to be done, whether it be to say something, see something, or do something, let us stop short and repress the precipitancy of our thoughts and the agitation of our actions; for God has said that His Spirit does not dwell in disquiet.

An excellent means of preserving our interior solitude and liberty of soul is to make it a rule to put an end at the close of every action to all reflections upon it, all reflex acts of self-love, whether of a vain joy or sorrow.

Let us be accustomed to recollect ourselves, during the day and in the midst of our occupations, by a simple view of God. Let us silence by that means all the movements of our heart, when they appear in the least agitated. Let us separate ourselves from all that does not come from God. Let us suppress our superfluous thoughts and reveries. Let us utter no useless word. Let us seek God within us, and we shall find Him without fail, and with Him joy and peace.

Let us be careful not to suffer ourselves to be overwhelmed by the multiplicity of our exterior operations, be they what they may. Let us endeavor to commence every enterprise with a pure view to the glory of God, continue it without distraction, and finish it without impatience. The intervals of relaxation and amusement are the most dangerous for us, and perhaps the most useful for

others; we must then be on our guard that we be as faithful as possible to the presence of God. We can never employ our leisure hours better than in refreshing our spiritual strength by a secret and intimate communion with God. Prayer is so necessary and the source of so many blessings, that he who has discovered the treasure can not be prevented from having recourse to it whenever he has an opportunity.

INDEPENDENCE.

Do not suffer yourself to get excited by what is said about you. Let the world talk. Do you strive to do the will of God; as for that of men, you would never succeed in doing it to their satisfaction, and it is not worth the pains.

Let the water flow beneath the bridge. Let men be men; that is to say, weak, vain, inconsistent, unjust, false, and presumptuous. Let the world be the world still; you can not prevent it. Let every one follow his own inclination and habits: you can not recast them, and the best course is to let them be as they are and bear with them. Do not think it strange when you witness unreasonableness and injustice; rest in peace in the bosom of God: He sees it all more clearly than you do, and yet permits it. Be content to do quietly and gently what it becomes you to do, and let everything else be to you as though it were not.

As long as the world is anything to us, so long

our freedom is but a word, and we are as easily captured as a bird whose leg is fastened by a thread. He seems to be free; the string is not visible, but he can fly only its length, and he is a prisoner.

Do not be vexed at what people say. Let them speak while you endeavor to do the will of God. A little silence, peace, and communion with God will compensate you for all the injustice of men. We must love our fellow-beings without depending on their friendship. They leave us, they return, and they go from us again. Let them go or come; it is the feather blown about by the wind. Fix your attention upon God alone in your connection with them. It is He alone who, through them, consoles or afflicts you.

Possess your soul in patience. Renew often within you the feeling of the presence of God, that you may learn moderation. There is nothing truly great but lowliness, charity, fear of ourselves, and detachment from the dominion of sense. Accustom yourself gradually to carry prayer into your daily occupations. Speak, move, act in peace as if you were in prayer. Do everything without eagerness as if by the Spirit of God. As soon as you perceive your natural impetuosity impelling you, retire into the sanctuary where dwells the Father of spirits; listen to what you hear there; and then neither say nor do anything but what He dictates in your heart. You will find that you will become more tranquil, that your words will be fewer and more to the pur-

pose, and that with less effort you will accomplish more good. When the heart is fixed on God it can easily accustom itself to suspend the natural movements of ardent feeling, and to wait for the favorable moment when the voice within may speak. This is the continual sacrifice of self, and the life of faith.

THE FAULTS OF OTHERS.

Perfection is easily tolerant of the imperfections of others; it becomes all things to all men. We must not be surprised at the greatest defects in good souls, and must quietly let them alone until God gives the signal of gradual removal; otherwise we shall pull up the wheat with the tares.

They who correct others ought to watch the moment when God touches their hearts; we must bear a fault with patience till we perceive His Spirit reproaching them within. We must imitate Him who gently reproves, so that they feel that it is less God that condemns them than their own hearts. When we blame with impatience, because we are displeased with the fault, it is a human censure and not the disapprobation of God. It is a sensitive self-love that can not forgive the self-love of others. The more self-love we have, the more severe our censures. There is nothing so vexatious as the collisions between one excessive self-love and another still more violent and excessive. The passions of others are infinitely ridiculous to those who are under the dominion of their own. The ways of

God are very different. He is ever full of kindness for us; He gives us strength; He regards us with pity and condescension; He remembers our weakness; He waits for us.

I am very sorry for the imperfections you find in human beings, but you must learn to expect but little from them; this is the only security against disappointment. We must receive from them what they are able to give us, as from trees the fruits that they yield. God bears with imperfect beings even when they resist His goodness. We ought to imitate this merciful patience and endurance. It is only imperfection that complains of what is imperfect. The more perfect we are, the more gentle and quiet we become toward the defects of others.

The defects of our neighbors interfere with our own; our vanity is wounded by that of another; our own haughtiness finds our neighbor's ridiculous and insupportable; our restlessness is rebuked by the sluggishness and indolence of this person; our gloom is disturbed by the gayety and frivolity of that person; and our heedlessness by the shrewdness and address of another. If we were faultless we should not be so much annoyed by the defects of those with whom we associate. If we were to acknowledge honestly that we have not virtue enough to bear patiently with our neighbor's weaknesses, we should show our own imperfection, and this alarms our vanity. We therefore make our weakness pass for strength, elevate it to a virtue,

and call it zeal. For it is not surprising to see how tranquil we are about the errors of others when they do not trouble us, and how soon this wonderful zeal kindles against those who excite our jealousy or weary our patience.

NOT PERFECT IN A MOMENT.

Neither in His gracious nor providential dealings does God work a miracle lightly. It would be as great a wonder to see a person full of self become in a moment dead to all self-interest and all sensitiveness as it would be to see a slumbering infant wake in the morning a fully developed man. God works in a mysterious way in grace as well as in nature, concealing His operations under an imperceptible succession of events, and thus keeps us always in the darkness of faith.

He makes use of the inconstancy and ingratitude of the creature, and of the disappointments and surfeits which accompany prosperity, to detach us from them both. All this dealing appears perfectly natural, and it is by this succession of natural means that we are burnt as by a slow fire. We should like to be consumed at once by the flames of pure love; but such an end would cost us scarce anything. It is only an excessive self-love that desires thus to become perfect in a moment, and at so cheap a rate.

We cling to an infinity of things which we never suspect; we only feel that they are a part of us

when they are snatched away, as I am only conscious that I have hairs when they are pulled from my head. God develops to us little by little what is within us, of which we are until then entirely ignorant, and we are astonished at discovering in our very virtues defects of which we should never have believed ourselves capable.

God spares us by discovering our weakness to us in proportion as our strength to support the view of it increases. We discover our imperfections one by one as we are able to cure them. Without this merciful preparation that adapts our strength to the light within, we should be in despair.

To the sincere desire to do the will of God we must add a cheerful spirit that is not overcome when it has failed, but tries again and again to do better; hoping always to the very end to be able to do it; bearing with its own involuntary weakness as God bears with it; waiting with patience for the moment when it shall be delivered from it; going straight on in singleness of heart according to the strength that it can command; losing no time by looking back, nor making useless reflections when it falls, which can only embarrass and retard its progress. The first sight of our little failings should humble us, but we must press on; not judging ourselves with a Judaical rigor; not regarding God as a spy watching for our least offense, or as an enemy who places snares in our path, but as a Father who loves and wishes to save us; trusting in His good-

ness, invoking His blessing, and doubting all other support. This is true liberty.

HUMILITY.

The foundation of peace with all men is humility. Pride is incompatible with pride; hence arise divisions in the world. We must stifle all rising jealousies; all little contrivances to promote our own glory; vain desires to please or to succeed, or to be praised; the fear of seeing others preferred to ourselves; the anxiety to have our plans carried into effect; the natural love of dominion and desire to influence others. These rules are soon given, but it is not so easy to observe them. With some people, not only pride and hauteur render these duties very difficult, but great natural sensitiveness makes the practice of them nearly impossible, and, instead of respecting their neighbor with a true feeling of humility, all their charity amounts only to a sort of compassionate toleration that nearly resembles contempt.

Humility is the source of all true greatness; pride is ever impatient, ready to be offended. He who thinks nothing is due to him never thinks himself ill-treated; true meekness is not mere temperament, for this is only softness or weakness.

There is no true and constant gentleness without humility; while we are so fond of ourselves we are easily offended with others. Let us be persuaded that nothing is due to us, and then nothing will dis-

turb us. Let us often think of our own infirmities, and we shall become indulgent toward those of others.

DAILY FAULTS.

Little faults become great in our eyes in proportion as the pure light of God increases in us, just as the sun in rising reveals the true dimensions of objects which were dimly and confusedly discovered during the night. Be sure that, with the increase of the inward light, the imperfections which you have hitherto seen will be beheld as far greater and more deadly in their foundations than you now conceive them, and that you will witness, in addition, the development of a crowd of others, of the existence of which you have not now the slightest suspicion. You will find the weaknesses necessary to deprive you of all confidence in your own strength; but this discovery, far from discouraging, will but serve to destroy your self-reliance, and raze to the ground the edifice of pride.

Our faults, even those most difficult to bear, will all be of service to us if we make use of them for our humiliation without relaxing our efforts to correct them. We must bear with ourselves without either flattery or discouragement, a mean seldom attained. Utter despair of ourselves, in consequence of a conviction of our helplessness and unbounded confidence in God, is the true foundation of the spiritual edifice.

Discouragement is not a fruit of humility, but

of pride; nothing can be worse. Suppose we have stumbled, or even fallen, let us rise and run again; all our falls are useful if they strip us of a disastrous confidence in ourselves, while they do not take away a humble and salutary trust in God.

Carefully purify your conscience from daily faults; suffer no sin to dwell in your heart; small as it may seem, it obscures the light of grace, weighs down the soul, and hinders that constant communion with Jesus Christ which it should be your pleasure to cultivate; you will become lukewarm, forget God, and find yourself growing in attachment to the creature. The great point is never to act in opposition to the inward light, but be willing to go as far as God would have us.

MOTIVES.

God does not so much regard our actions as the motives of love from which they spring, and the pliability of our wills to His. Men judge our deeds by their outward appearance; with God, that which is most dazzling in the eyes of men is of no account. What He desires is a pure intention, a will ready for anything and ever pliable in His hands, and an honest abandonment of self; and all this can be much more frequently manifested on small than on extraordinary occasions; there will also be much less danger from pride, and the trial will be far more searching. Indeed, it sometimes happens that we find it harder to part with a trifle than with an

important interest; it may be more of a cross to abandon a vain amusement than to bestow a large sum in charity.

The greatest danger of all consists in this, that by neglecting small matters the soul becomes accustomed to unfaithfulness. We grieve the Holy Spirit, we return to ourselves, we think it a little thing to be wanting toward God. On the other hand, true love can see nothing small; everything that can either please or displease God seems to be great. Not that true love disturbs the soul with scruples, but it puts no limit to its faithfulness; it acts simply with God; and as it does not concern itself about those things which God does not require from it, so it never hesitates an instant about those which He does, be they great or small.

TRUE PRAYER.

True prayer is only another name for the love of God. To pray is to desire—but to desire what God would have us desire. He who asks what he does not from the bottom of his heart desire, is mistaken in thinking that he prays. O how few there are who pray; for how few are they who desire what is truly good! Crosses, external and internal humiliation, renouncement of our own wills, the death of self, and the establishment of God's throne upon the ruins of self-love,—these are indeed good. Not to desire these is not to pray; to desire them seriously, soberly, constantly, and with reference to all the

details of life,—this is true prayer. Alas! how many souls full of self and of an imaginary desire for perfection in the midst of hosts of voluntary imperfections, have never yet uttered this true prayer of the heart! It is in reference to this that St. Augustine says, "He that loveth little, prayeth little; he that loveth much, prayeth much."

Our intercourse with God resembles that with a friend; at first there are a thousand things to be told and as many to be asked; but after a time these diminish, while the pleasure of being together does not. Everything has been said, but the satisfaction of seeing each other, of feeling that one is near the other, of reposing in the enjoyment of a pure and sweet friendship, can be felt without conversation; the silence is eloquent and mutually understood. Each feels that the other is in perfect sympathy with him, and that their two hearts are incessantly poured out into each other, and constitute but one.

Those who have stations of importance to fill have generally so many indispensable duties to perform that, without the greatest care in the management of their time, none will be left to be alone with God. If they have ever so little inclination to dissipation, the hours that belong to God and their neighbor disappear altogether. We must be firm in observing our rules. This strictness seems excessive, but without it everything falls into confusion; we become dissipated, relaxed, and lose strength; we insensibly separate from God, surren-

der ourselves to all our pleasures, and only then begin to perceive that we have wandered when it is almost hopeless to think of endeavoring to return.

THE HUMAN WILL.

True virtue and pure love reside in the will alone. The question is not, What is the state of our feelings? But, What is the condition of our will? Let us will to have whatever we have, and not to have whatever we have not. We would not even be delivered from our sufferings, for it is God's place to apportion to us our crosses and our joys. In the midst of affliction we rejoice, as did the apostles; but it is not joy of the feelings, joy of the will. The faithful soul has a will which is perfectly free; it accepts without questioning whatever bitter blessings God develops, wills them, loves them, and embraces them; it would not be freed from them if it could be accomplished by a simple wish; for such a wish would be an act originating in self and contrary to its abandonment to Providence; and it is desirous that this abandonment should be absolutely perfect.

The important question is, not how much you enjoy religion, but whether you will whatever God wills. The essence of virtue consists in the attitude of the will. That kingdom of God which is within us consists in our willing whatever God wills, always, in everything, without reservation. Thus nothing can ever come to pass against our

wishes; for nothing can happen contrary to the will of God. The interior life is the beginning of the blessed peace of the saints, who eternally cry, Amen, Alleluia! We adore, we praise, we bless God in everything; we see Him incessantly, and in all things His paternal hand is the sole object of our contemplation. There are no longer any evils; for even the most terrible that can come upon us work together for our good. Can the suffering that God designs to purify us and make us worthy of Himself be called an evil?

Happy is he who never hesitates; who fears only that he follows with too little readiness; who would rather do too much against self than too little. Blessed is he who, when asked for a sample, boldly presents his entire stock and suffers God to cut from the whole cloth. It is thought that this state is a painful one. It is a mistake; here is peace and liberty; here the heart, detached from everything, is immeasurably enlarged, so as to become illimitable; nothing cramps it; and, in accordance with the promise, it becomes, in a certain sense, one with God Himself.

True progress does not consist in a multitude of views, nor in austerities, trouble, and strife; it is simply willing nothing and everything, without reservation and choice, cheerfully performing each day's journey as Providence appoints it for us: seeking nothing, refusing nothing, finding everything in the present moment, and suffering God,

who does everything, to do His pleasure in and by us without the slightest resistance.

VARIOUS ADVICES.

You may be exercised in self-renunciation in every event of every day.

Peace in this life springs from acquiescence even in disagreeable things, not in an exemption from suffering.

Whoever will refuse nothing which comes in the order of God, and seek nothing out of that order, need never fear to finish his day's work without partaking of the cross of Jesus Christ. There is an indispensable providence for crosses as well as for the necessaries of life; they are a part of our daily bread; God will never suffer it to fail.

A life of faith produces two things: First, it enables us to see God in everything; secondly, it holds the mind in a state of readiness for whatever may be His will. This continual, unceasing dependence on God, this state of entire peace and acquiescence of the soul in whatever may happen, is the true silent martyrdom of self.

With the exception of sin, nothing happens in this world out of the will of God. It is He who is the author, ruler, and bestower of all; He has numbered the hairs of our head, the leaves of every tree,

the sand upon the seashore, and the drops of the ocean.

This is the whole of religion: to get out of self in order to get into God.

To be a Christian is to be an imitator of Jesus Christ. In what can we imitate Him if not in his humiliation? Nothing else can bring us near to Him. We may adore Him as omnipotent, fear Him as just, love Him with all our heart as good and merciful, but we can only imitate Him as humble, submissive, poor, and despised.

What men stand most in need of is the knowledge of God. It is not astonishing that men do so little for God, and that the little which they do costs them so much. They do not know Him; scarcely do they believe that He exists. If He were known He would be loved.

Thou causest me clearly to understand that Thou makest use of the evils and imperfections of the creature to do the good which Thou hast determined beforehand. Thou concealest Thyself under the importunate visitor who intrudes upon the occupation of Thy impatient child, that he may learn not to be impatient, and that he may die to the gratification of being free to study or work as he pleases. Thou availest Thyself of slanderous tongues to destroy the reputation of Thine innocent children, that, besides their innocence, they may

offer Thee the sacrifice of their too highly cherished reputation. By the cunning artifices of the envious Thou layest low the fortunes of those whose hearts were too much set upon their prosperity. Thus Thou mercifully strewest bitterness over everything that is not Thyself, to the end that our hearts, formed to love Thee and to exist upon Thy love, may be, as it were, constrained to return to Thee by a want of satisfaction in everything else.

"O 't is enough whate'er befall,
To know that God is all in all.
'T is this which makes my treasure,
'T is this which brings my gain;
Converting woe to pleasure,
And reaping joy from pain."

Madame Guyon.

"There are in the loud-stunning tide
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of the everlasting chime,
Who carry music in their heart
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart;
Plying their daily task with busier feet,
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."

Keble.

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